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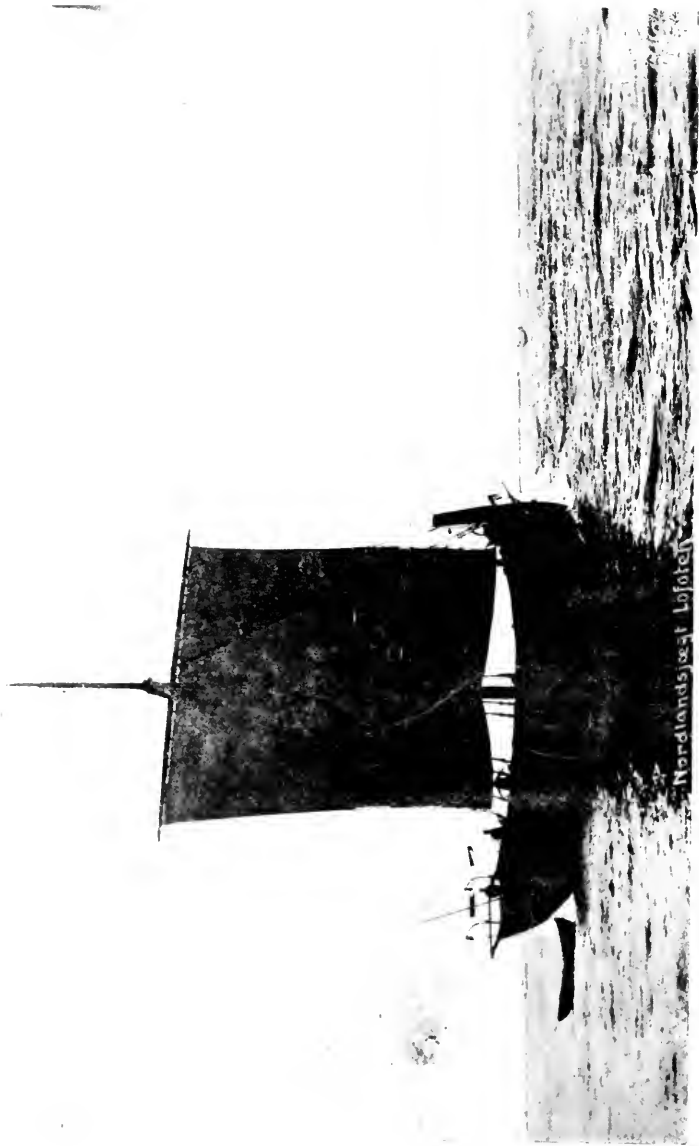












BOAT WITH SQUARE SAIL, RESEMBLING THE OLD TRADING-SHIPS

# THE NORSE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

BY

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(JOHNS HOPKINS)



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## CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	7—10
1. Thormod Torfason . . . . .	11—13
2. Carl Christian Rafn . . . . .	14—18
3. Gustav Storm . . . . .	19—22
4. Fridtjof Nansen . . . . .	23—24
5. William Hovgaard . . . . .	25—27
6. Strait of Belle Isle . . . . .	28—33
7. Labrador . . . . .	34—44
8. The Northern Geography . . . . .	46—65
9. Eirik the Red . . . . .	66—77
10. Flateyrbok . . . . .	78—99
11. Thorfin Karlsefne's Saga . . . . .	101—121
12. Freydis, Helge and Finboge . . . . .	122—127
13. Norse Legends . . . . .	128—130
14. The View Held in the Two Sagas . . . . .	131—137
15. Two Traditions . . . . .	138—143
16. Two Accounts . . . . .	144—152
17. Conclusion . . . . .	153—157

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Nordlandsjægt from Lofoten.....	Frontispiece
2. Strait of Belle Isle.....	30
3. Moonlight Glimpse of the Labrador Coast.....	35
4. At Port Manvers.....	36
5. Kiglapait.....	37
6. Nachvak Bay.....	39
7. Eskimos at Hebron.....	43
8. Kogarsuk River, Nachvak Bay.....	43
9. From Mount Faunce, Nachvak Bay.....	45
10. From Mount Ford, Nachvak Bay.....	45
11. The Earth, According to A. A. Bjørnbo.....	56
12. Map of Sigurd Stephansson.....	58
13. Eiriksvág.....	68
14. Eiriksfjord, From Brattalid.....	70
15. Brattalid.....	73
16. Igaliiko (Gardar).....	75
17. Northern Countries.....	77
18. East Coast of Newfoundland.....	79
19. Trinity Bay, Newfoundland.....	79
20. Labrador Coast, Near Cape Mugford.....	81
21. Ogualik Island.....	82
22. Map of Mugford Tickle.....	83
23. Mugford Tickle, South End.....	84
24. Cape Mugford.....	85
25. Nanuktok Island.....	86
26. Mugford Tickle, From the North.....	87
27. Bishops Mitre.....	88
28. Northeast Coast.....	100
29. South Side, Nachvak Bay.....	103
30. Pomiadluk.....	104
31. Davis Inlet.....	105
32. Strait of Belle Isle.....	108
33. Newfoundland.....	113
34. Humber River, Newfoundland.....	118

## INTRODUCTION

The Norse discovery of America is not what we would call a popular question, though it has attracted the attention of many nations. Books and treatises on this subject have appeared in English, French and German. As might be expected, the question has especially interested the people in the Scandinavian countries whence the adventurous navigators drew their origin. After the complete disappearance of the Greenlanders, who in all likelihood were the leaders in the enterprise, their kinsmen in Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden took up their cause and defended their honor. It is only natural that the kinsmen of the explorers should take a lively interest in the achievements of their ancestors. A long list of prominent names testify to the interest that they take in their forefathers. In America the interest in this subject springs from two causes. In the first place there is a general desire to learn and understand the history of the country. Most historians now allow some place to the early Norse discoveries. In the second place the descendants of the old Norsemen have settled in large numbers in this country, and like the Dutch and the French they still cherish a love for the land of their origin and take pride in the achievements of their kinsmen. To the modern Norseman who has had a part in the development of his adopted country it is a feeling of pride to know that his kinsmen were the first white men to set foot on American soil.

But the fact that so much is written on this question is not altogether due to national pride or vanity. The main reason why people study the Vinland question is a scientific one. The discovery of America is one of the great events

in the history of the world, and it is a matter of grave concern to know the truth. We want to know who discovered America. People in the Scandinavian countries have taken an especial interest in the question, because the documents are in their own tongue and they have ready access to the old literature. The saga way of thinking is not more remote but that they can grasp things that appear obscure to others.

After so much has been written on this vexed question, it might appear superfluous to add another book to bewilder the minds and to clog the market; but it seems that every new book has only aroused a new interest and increased the desire to study the subject. From the discussions following the last book it has always appeared that the reading public has not felt satisfied with its conclusions and has looked forward to a different solution. For two reasons especially I have been unable to agree with the writers on this subject. The attitude which they have taken to the old sagas and the neglect which they have shown to the old geography I consider indefensible. If these points become unduly prominent in the course of the work, it is because others have overlooked them.

If this work has any character of its own, it is that it accepts without reserve the statements of the saga narrative and attempts to follow the text closely. The task consists in identifying the localities described in the sagas with places along the east coast of America. Much excellent work of this kind has been done in Greenland and Iceland. Numerous places have been compared with the descriptions in the sagas and found to accord in a remarkable way. It has appeared to me that it was now time to study the nature and the appearance of the country along the east coast of America and to compare it carefully with the descriptions in the Vinland sagas. Aside from the likelihood that the Greenlanders first visited the mainland of America, the Vinland sagas are after all our final authorities in the matter. It stands to reason that if they are worth following we should follow them closely and assume that they say just what they mean. For one to say, as many have done, that he follows the sagas and then to disregard them except in the most general way is to set himself up as final authority



on what the Norsemen saw and where they sailed nine hundred years ago.

The narrative and the description in the Vinland sagas appear to me to be quite as natural and real as in the sagas laid in Greenland and Iceland. There are numerous details and names of places and descriptions of countries and coasts that can hardly be fictitious. Actual investigations in Greenland and Iceland have shown that the places correspond closely to the saga description. The same is the result of archeological investigations everywhere. It would not be surprising if the same would prove true in the case of the Vinland sagas. In one way the work here becomes more difficult, as it extends over so wide an area and covers so long a coastline. For the same reason the descriptions in some cases are so much more general and more elusive, but no less true. The possibilities of error are multiplied by the increasing distances. Kjalarnes and Krossanes should be identified on the same general principles that Gardar and Herjolfsnes were located. The difficulty of obtaining definite starting points on the American side I have minimized by making the points of departure on the other side of the sea more specific. The complete severance of Greenland and Vinland for centuries from the rest of the world makes a gap in the historical continuity and necessitates a treatment that is different from that followed in Iceland or Norway.

Those who have treated the Vinland question have in practice followed the method of fairy tales. Historical events have a fixed geography and are held together by a chain of cause and effect. A myth or a fairy tale has no definite place. Even when a locality is indicated it is vague and imaginary in its nature. A fairy tale is cut loose from things real and moves in a world of its own. In the same way the historians of the Vinland sagas have cut loose from Greenland and landed the explorers at will on some part of the American coast. They have plunged *in medias res* and told us all about Vinland without letting us know how they got there. They have neglected to show why they have selected this or that part of the coast for the ancient Vinland. The connecting link between Greenland and the

New World is missing. To illustrate this point I shall cite an instance. Rafn, who was well versed in the old sagas, told in his great work the story of the sagas; but the members of the Rhode Island Historical Society, who possessed very scant knowledge of the sagas, located Vinland for him. The organic connection between the two parts was broken and Vinland does not hang even by a thread to Greenland, which is the starting point. I have endeavored by a careful study of Norse geography and a closer reading of the texts to supply this defect and to fill the gap that has before existed. I have not made this link. The sagas and geographies are clear and explicit on that point; only writers have failed to bring it out.

No work is done single-handed. Friends generally assist in some way or other and get little credit for it. With Mr. Torkel Oftelie, who is deeply interested in all subjects touching Norse literature, I have discussed many phases of this question and reaped the benefit of his judicious remarks. Professor Knut Gjerset, the author of the "History of the Norwegian People," has read the manuscript and made some helpful suggestions. Mr. Henry Goddard Leach of the American-Scandinavian Foundation has generously allowed me the use of many illustrations for this volume, and Professor E. B. Delabarre of Brown University has put at my disposal the photographs taken on the Brown-Harvard Expedition in 1900.

## THORMOD TORFASON

**T**HORMOD TORFASON, or Torfaeus, as he styled himself in Latin, was the first modern writer to treat the Vinland voyages somewhat at length and in book form<sup>1</sup>. Torfason was a native of Iceland, and like many of his countrymen had received his education in Denmark. He was deeply interested in history, and in the course of a long and busy life gathered a vast store of knowledge which he used in writing the histories of several northern countries. In 1705 appeared his *Vinlandia*, or the story of the Vinland voyages. In order that it might be read by the educated classes in all countries he wrote this work, like his other books, in Latin.

Before the time of Torfason the Vinland Voyages were known only in part from the notices found in Arngrim Jonsson. It was high time to publish the accounts as they appeared in the sagas. Torfason narrates the events as they appear in the two sagas without concealing the discrepancies which they contain and without offering any explanation. It was evident to him that the two accounts did not agree. The one relates that Bjarne Herjolfsson and the other that Leif Eiriksson was the first to see the new continent. Although they differed in details, Torfason believed that they agreed in the main and that the minor discrepancies only proved their general agreement, since it demonstrated that we have two independent accounts of the same events and not two copies of the same narrative. He preferred the account in the *Flateyrbok* to that in the *Karlsefne* saga, inasmuch as it appeared to him to be more plain, direct and probable. In regard to *Karlsefne's* expedition, however, the account given in the *Karlsefne*

saga seemed to be preferable, though it errs in ascribing this expedition to Thorvald Eiríksson, since he had died several years before. Nor is it correct to say that Karlsefne discovered and named Helluland and Markland, as Leif had already done so.

Torfason does not attempt to reconcile the two sagas. He merely recounts the events in the order in which they come first in the *Flateyrbok* and then in the *Hauksbok*. Unlike modern scholars he made no ado about texts. Although he had at his disposal the best parchment manuscripts, he chose to follow a paper manuscript, No. 768, which Björn Jonsson had copied for his own use in compiling the *Greenland Annals*<sup>2</sup>. Björn had inserted notes and remarks of his own, which Torfason was not always careful to distinguish from the text. The reputation that Torfason enjoyed as a historian gave added weight to the *Vinlandia*, which continued for more than one hundred years to be an authority on the *Vinland Voyages*.

Torfason first narrates according to the *Flateyrbok* the voyages of Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald, then Thorstein's unfortunate attempt to find *Vinland* and Karlsefne's effort to colonize it, and finally he describes the ghastly scenes connected with the voyage of Freydis, Helge and Finboge. Although the last voyage rests only upon the authority of the *Flateyrbok*, Torfason believes that it has taken place, since it was the last voyage made to *Vinland*.

Then follows the account in the *Hauksbok* of Leif's voyage to Norway and his return to Greenland, when he was driven out of his course and came upon unknown lands. He tells of Thorstein's failure and untimely death in the plague that devastated the Western Settlement, and finally he narrates at length the story of the great expedition led by Thorfin Karlsefne to *Straumfjord* and *Hop*. As if to relieve and enliven the narrative by variety, the author introduces at various places episodes which have nothing to do with the *Vinland voyages*, but which are in themselves worth reading, such as the account of the witch Thorbjörg in Greenland and the Froda wonders in Iceland.

As to the location of Vinland, Torfason had no definite conviction. He believed in general that it should be located where the nature and the products of the land best corresponded to the description in the sagas. He overestimated the value of the so-called astronomical observation which Leif took in Vinland, and supposed that it showed the exact location of Vinland. According to the account in the *Flateyrbok* day and night in Vinland were of more equal length than in Greenland or Iceland, and the sun had *eyktarstad* and *dagmálastad* on the shortest day in the year. From the custom in vogue in Iceland of placing *dagmálastad* at 9 A. M. and *eyktarstad* or *non* at 3 P. M., Torfason assumed at first that the shortest day in Vinland lasted six hours and on that basis placed Vinland in North Labrador ( $58^{\circ} 26'$ ), which he called Estotiland. But when his book had already been printed and he had read Peringskjöld's translation of the *Heimskringla*, he realized that a more southerly climate would better answer the purpose, and added a supplement to the *Vinlandia*. He found in "Grágás," the old church laws of Iceland, that when they divided the southwest into three equal parts, then it was *eykt* when the sun had passed through two, and one part remained. He assumed that southwest was the southwest quarter and equivalent to the time from 12 M. to 6 P. M. Two thirds of this would be 4 P. M., or *eyktarstad*, and accordingly 8 A. M. would be *dagmálastad*. Having found that the shortest day in the year was eight hours long, he located Vinland on the 49th parallel, which passes through northern Newfoundland<sup>3</sup>. Beyond determining the latitude for Vinland Torfason does not attempt to locate any place mentioned in the sagas.

## CARL CHRISTIAN RAFN

THE scholar who now took up the work was Carl Christian Rafn, a Dane educated at Copenhagen<sup>4</sup>. Torfason had merely retold the stories of the sagas and left it to those who knew or inhabited the lands in question to determine the location of Helluland, Markland and Vinland. Rafn conceived a more ambitious plan. He purposed to collect all the documents that had to do with the Vinland voyages, to study the geography of the east coast of America, and by combining the two decide the location of Vinland. When he had collected and edited in an elaborate way all the material that had to do with the Vinland sagas, the Royal Antiquarian Society of the North supplied it with engravings, maps, plates and facsimiles of manuscripts and published it in a folio volume of 526 pages in 1837. In order to make his work as accurate and valuable as possible, he made use of the large collection of manuscripts which is preserved at Copenhagen. In the first place we have a general summary of the contents of the sagas in the light in which he saw them, then the two sagas according to the manuscripts of the Flateyrbok and AM. 544 and 557. Then follow numerous selections from other sagas touching the Vinland voyages. All the texts have Latin and Danish translations and critical and explanatory notes. Brief citations appear in the notes. Finally we have complete indices and long genealogical tables of families prominent in these sagas. Though the selections and the arrangement might have been improved, this collection of sources, as yet for the most part unpublished, has since proved to be a mine of information to scholars. Rafn was well versed in Norse literature and has done a useful and

meritorious work. Yet it is to be feared that what he valued most highly is not now taken so seriously. He aimed to locate Vinland. For this task he possessed indeed the literary knowledge, but lacked geographical insight. He never visited America, and the accounts of the Atlantic seaboard published at that period were inadequate to make up for lack of travel.

As long as Norsemen frequented these waters the lands, bays and capes bore Norse names that passed on from generation to generation and would have continued down to our time as in Iceland, if the Norsemen had maintained the connection. But when the sailings ceased, the places were gradually forgotten and the tradition broken. On the one hand we have now accounts of discoveries without any fixed places to which we may attach them, and on the other hand we have long coast lines which have lost their former history. To reconcile again the two demanded knowledge of the old sagas as well as geographical acquaintance with the east coast of America.

All attempts to locate Vinland up to the time were based on a passage in the Flateyrbok which states that day and night in Vinland were of more equal length than in Greenland or Iceland and that the shortest day in the year had *eyktarstad* and *dagmálastad*. *Eyktarstad* and *dagmálastad* were supposed to be astronomical points, which could be determined by calculation and in that way yield the location of Vinland. Pall Vidalin pointed out that according to Snorre's Edda the sun set in *eyktarstad* at 4:30 on the 17th of October at Reykholt, Snorre's Estate. *Eyktarstad* would thus be situated so much farther south as the difference between October 17 and December 22 in 1002. The astronomer Thomas Bugge calculated that this observation had been taken at 41° 22' north. Now Rafn soon discovered without much difficulty that Leif's and Karlsefne's booths had been situated on either side of Mount Hope Bay in Narragansett Bay. The exact place was 41° 24' 10" and was long held to be the Vinland of the sagas. Nova Scotia he assumed to be Markland and Newfoundland, Helluland, or litla Helluland, to distinguish it from Helluland hit mikla, as he called Labrador and

Baffin Land. In the mythological sagas Helluland hit mikla is North Greenland and could not lie south of Greenland. The fact that Labrador and Baffin Land lie between Rafn's Helluland and Greenland should have suggested to him that he had placed Vinland too far south. If the sagas really called Labrador and Baffin Land Helluland they would thereby admit that they had a poor conception of directions, which is far from being the case.

This blunder forced Rafn to assume that Leif and Thorvald sailed across the sea from Greenland to Newfoundland and made the transit twice as long and dangerous as it needed to be. He does not attempt to explain how they found their way past Newfoundland and reached Nova Scotia. Nor does he consider the distance between Greenland and Rhode Island and the possibility of accomplishing so long a voyage in the time specified in the sagas. The distance from Greenland to Rhode Island is not less than 2200 miles, which the Norse navigators are supposed to make in nine *doegr*. Just what a *doegr* is, writers are not agreed upon. If we assume with the majority that a *doegr* is twelve hours, nine *doegr* will amount to four days and a half. In case that is correct, then Bjarne and Leif sailed at the rate of 500 miles in a day and night and their ships had the speed of our best Atlantic liners. As Rafn saw that this would be wide of the mark, he accepted that *doegr* corresponded to 24 hours and thus reduced the speed by one-half. But even this speed is so great that only the best sailing vessels can make it under the most favorable circumstances and surpasses all the records which we have from the Viking period. Nine *doegr* appear to be the regular sailing to Vinland and can hardly correspond to 250 miles in 24 hours. In the remarkable voyage which Thorarin made from Møre in Norway to Eyraar in Iceland he did not reach the speed which the Vinland sailors seem to have maintained in all their voyages to Vinland. Sailing vessels now require from 30 to 40 days to go between Boston and Greenland. As long as we maintain that 9 *doegr* is 9 days, we may confidently dismiss the theory that Vinland was in New England.

Rafn like the other scholars of that period put great



faith in the so-called astronomical observation, as Bugge had calculated it. He corresponded with the Rhode Island Historical Society, which supplied him with drawings, maps and all the topographical information which he desired. With this assistance he soon located most of the places mentioned in the sagas. He even thought that he saw Norse runes in the Indian marks on the Dighton Writing Rock and in the Assonet Inscriptions.

If the distance from Greenland is too great, the distances in Vinland itself were rather short. Rafn discovered all the places referred to in the sagas within fifty miles. Cape Cod is Kjalarnes; Buzzards Bay and Marthas Vineyard are Straumfjord and Straumsey. Leif's booths lie on the east and Karlsefne's booths on the west side of Mount Hope Bay in Narragansett Bay. Nantucket is the island where Leif and his men went ashore and found sweet dew in the grass. One gets the impression from the saga that Straumfjord was far away from Kjalarnes; but on Rafn's map it is only a few miles. From Straumfjord Karlsefne sailed a "long" time before he reached Hop. Although the distance is not indicated in *doegr*, one is surprised to find it within 20 miles and that the "long" voyage could hardly have exceeded three or four hours. Still within these twenty miles the climate is said to have changed completely. While the winter is long and severe at Straumfjord and fish and game leave the coast in the fall, no snow fell at Mount Hope Bay, cattle grazed all winter and there was game and fish in abundance. It was strange that Karlsefne's men did not find Leif's booths, which were on the other side of the bay a couple of miles away. Besides, Mount Hope Bay is not a lake as in the saga, but a part of Narragansett Bay. South from Kjalarnes on the west side of the land Karlsefne sailed a "long" time when he searched for Thorhal. But this "long" voyage in Cape Cod Bay could hardly have exceeded two hours. The extreme simplicity of imagining that the pilot of Eirik the Red would get lost in Cape Cod Bay is amusing.

If these distances and directions are doubtful in the Karlsefne saga, they become impossible when we try to make them tally with the Flateyrbok. Here Vinland lies

on a north coast and ships pass east and west along the coast. While the ship's boat is exploring the country to the westward, Thorvald sails the merchant ship eastward along the land and then southward east of the land. To cruise east of the land Thorvald must have turned southward at the northeast corner of the land. In his cruise east of this land he comes upon the west coast of another land, which he follows north to Kjalarnes. From Kjalarnes he sails eastward along the land till he turns the corner and finds himself on the east coast of this land, where he falls in a battle against the natives and is buried at Krossanes.

One sees the futility of attempting to reconcile these coastlines with Rafn's map. The long north coast of Vinland he makes the south coast of Massachusetts on Buzzards Bay. The island which in the saga lies north of the land becomes Nantucket, which lies south of the land. When the saga relates that Thorvald sailed east along the north coast and south along the east coast, Rafn makes him sail east along the south coast and north along the east coast. At Kjalarnes he loses all sense of directions. The saga relates that Thorvald sails east from Kjalarnes. Rafn makes him sail straight west to Krossanes. This is sufficient to show that Rafn disregarded the distances and directions indicated in the sagas.

Rafn's theory had many faults and drawbacks, but his Vinland had the great advantage of being a grapeland. Many were willing to overlook minor shortcomings when they found what they considered essential. A Vinland without grapes did not appeal to them. They were not so critical about distances and directions. Rafn's work made a great impression and held its ground for fifty years. Rafn seems to have been credulous and unsuspecting. He accepted without question the so-called astronomical observation and Bugge's calculation. He did not question the location of Vinland at so great a distance from Greenland. He found no difficulty in adapting the two sagas to the same geography and proving the Norse origin of the Dighton Writing Rock and the Assonet inscriptions.

## GUSTAV STORM

FIFTY years later Gustav Storm, professor of history in the University of Christiania, Norway, wrote a book which gained immediate recognition and has since had a determining influence on several works<sup>5</sup>. Storm believed that the Norsemen had discovered America, and found his chief arguments in the *Karlsefne* saga. He was more critical than Rafn and often went to the other extreme. Rather than to accept too much, like Rafn, he threw away too much.

The astronomer Geelmuyden had in the meanwhile given a new interpretation to the passage in *Grágás*. According to him *eykt* is a fixed point and *cyktarstad* the coinciding point on the horizon. The Norsemen divided the horizon into eight parts, or octants, in such a way that south or southwest was the middle of the octant which it named. Counting from south, the southwest octant extends from  $22^{\circ} 30'$  to  $67^{\circ} 30'$ . When we divide southwest into three equal parts and take two-thirds, we obtain  $52^{\circ} 30'$  as the position of the sun in *cyktarstad*. Calculating from this, the latitude in which the sun set on the shortest day in the year in the 11th century, he derived  $49^{\circ} 55'$  north latitude. This was corrected by Captain R. L. Phytian, U. S. N., of Washington, D. C., to  $49^{\circ}$  and is the same that Torfason had reached in a crude way 180 years before. The assumption was, that Leif could not have taken this observation farther north. How much farther south was an open question.

Storm was of the opinion that Rafn had placed Vinland too far south. Nova Scotia lay nearer the parallel calculated by Geelmuyden and seemed to him to answer better the description given in the saga. The northern point of

Cape Breton Island might be Kjalarnes, past which Karlsefne sailed south and north on both sides of the island. He located Straumfjord at Gut of Canso and Hop farther west in Nova Scotia. Although Nova Scotia lies in a subarctic climate and produces no grapes, Storm claimed that it was a grapeland, relying for this information on the reports of travelers of the sixteenth century, who alleged that they had seen grapes there. Even geographically Nova Scotia can hardly he said to correspond to Straumfjord and Hop. To be sure it has a Cape that points northward, which in so far might be Kjalarnes, but one looks in vain for long sandy beaches on one side and bays on the other side of the nes. In the saga Straumfjord lies on an east coast that trends eastward, while Nova Scotia has a south coast that trends westward.

It was plain to Storm that the description of Vinland as it is given in the Flateyrbok did not fit Nova Scotia. Storm was convinced that no place on the coast could be found to tally with the Flateyrbok and so did not seek to reconcile the two sagas. The Flateyrbok impressed him as being fictitious and unreal and resembling the mythological sagas composed in the 14th century, when the historical events were largely forgotten. In short, the Flateyrbok appeared to him to be of a later date than the Karlsefne saga and largely imaginary. Again the contents of the Flateyrbok differed materially from the Karlsefne saga. It tells of five expeditions to Vinland, while the Karlsefne saga knows only of two. Bjarne Herjolfsson is otherwise unknown. Gudrid's husband, Thore, the Norwegian, is mentioned in no other saga. Halfrid is there the paternal grandmother of bishop Thorlak Runolfsson, but elsewhere she is his mother. For the future, Storm thought, historians should accept of the Flateyrbok only what could be corroborated from other sources.

There are indeed difficulties in this saga, but hardly of such a nature as to call for the heroic measures resorted to by Storm. He did not see that the two sagas are so intimately bound together, that by wrecking the one he seriously endangered the other. It is plain that he exaggerated the case in order to get rid of the Flateyrbok, which did not

suit his views. It is putting the thing on edge to say that the two narratives disagree throughout and that if the one is genuine the other is false. The sagas, being transmitted by oral tradition, often differ in minor details. If the descriptions of Helluland resemble the mythological sagas, it is because both attempt to describe rocky and desolate tracts beyond the growth of vegetation.

As to the geography of the northern countries Storm went astray. He found in bits of Icelandic geography a statement that Helluland and Markland lay to the south of Greenland, and without fitting these fragments into the other geographical notices from the old literature he assumed that this was the general conception of the Norsemen in the age of discoveries. In practice his theory proved so difficult that he could not follow it out.

Storm thought he saw the solution of Karlsefne's route past Vestri Bygd. He placed Bjørneø in Lysefjord in the West Bygd. By going past West Bygd Karlsefne thought, according to Storm, that he could shorten the passage over the open sea. But if Helluland really lay to the south of Greenland, as he maintained, this could only lengthen the passage and make them pass and repass the same waters.

Storm was in some ways a keen observer. He saw that Rafn had placed Vinland too far south and moved it to Nova Scotia, which in latitude was a fairly acceptable location. He was also the first one to see that the geography of the two sagas was not the same. Storm's book is interesting reading and abounds in keen and just observations on many subjects; but it is to be feared that he was never quite at home in this question.

Storm was a critic. To solve a question he accepted a theory to which he adjusted the facts in the case. All went well as long as the facts agreed with the theory. But if they did not agree, there was trouble. The scientific way of letting the facts fall into their places naturally and without forcing he did not understand or did not have the patience to practice. With him it was to bend or break and it often broke.

Storm correctly refused to accept Rafn's location of Vinland in Rhode Island, which he thought too far south and

made the voyage too long and difficult. He assumed that Nova Scotia was the Vinland of the sagas. In latitude it was nearly correct and accorded better with the astronomical calculation of Geelmuyden. But unfortunately for his theory it has a subarctic climate and does not produce grapes nor does it agree with the description of either saga. To be sure, he was able after a fashion to adjust the Karlsefne saga to this location, but the Flateyarbok requires a different geography and could not be accommodated within the limited conditions of Nova Scotia. The false assumption that Nova Scotia was Vinland led to other blunders. Finding that the Flateyarbok could not be accommodated to Nova Scotia, he decided that this saga was spurious and fictitious and rejected it. Again, when he found that the sailing directions and the distances in the saga did not go well with Nova Scotia as Vinland, he assumed that these were unimportant. It did not occur to him that his theory might be at fault.

In regard to the northern geography he proceeded in a similar way. Thinking that he had found in some fragmentary bits of Icelandic geography the novel and striking idea that Helluland, Markland and Vinland were islands situated south of Greenland, he concluded without studying the complete geographies that this was the prevailing conception among the old Norsemen. This was unfortunate, as it distorted all the sailing directions and made it impossible to comprehend the sagas. The Björneø from which Karlsefne sailed to Helluland he placed in Lysefjord in the West Bygd to accommodate it to his new geography. But as Labrador and Newfoundland lie to the southwest, he had to admit that the Norsemen sailed southwest when they meant to sail south and that the Norsemen never really found their bearings in the western waters.

## FRIDTJOF NANSEN

**F**RIDTJOF NANSEN has taken up the Vinland question from a different angle and treated it from a new point of view. It is a welcome contribution and presents the question in a readable and interesting manner. His treatment, however, is literary rather than historical. After the manner of Moltke Moe he treats the Vinland sagas<sup>6</sup> as the final development of old myths. Nansen is of the opinion that the Vinland sagas are the Norse version of the Greek and Latin fables and myths about the Isles of the Blessed. He thinks that the Irish took these myths from the Greeks and Romans, transformed them somewhat and passed them on to the Icelanders, who wove them into tales about a land which they were supposed to have found in the west. The voyages of St. Brandan as told in *De Fortunatis Insulis* seem to have been known in Iceland and to have influenced Icelandic literature. Fictitious writings have often influenced and colored historical works. That the Vinland sagas show the marks of this and other influences from Ireland is freely admitted. But to assume that the Vinland sagas are essentially fictitious is to misunderstand their character. Much of this misunderstanding on the part of Nansen comes from the fact that he follows in the footsteps of Gustav Storm. Storm had discarded the *Flateyrbok* and parts of the *Karls-efne* saga as fictitious. He had no faith in the distances and sailing directions and accepted a geography that was altogether fictitious. Placing Helluland, Markland and Vinland as islands in the middle of the Atlantic south of Greenland, he adopted a geography that was nearly as mythical as that of St. Brandan's voyages. Taking over this literary inheritance from Storm and with an interest in the

history of myths, Nansen could hardly fail in studying the Vinland sagas to arrive at the conclusions that he sets forth in *Northern Mists*. A closer study of all the Icelandic geographies would have shown that Storm and Björnbo were totally wrong and that the real geography of the sagas tallies nearly with our own. As a practical man with a wide knowledge of the northern regions, Nansen would have arrived at different results if he had approached the subject in a different way.

Still he does not deny the Norse discovery of America; but he bases it on the probability of the case rather than on the narrative of the sagas and upon incidental remarks in the Vinland sagas and in the Icelandic literature. He takes it for granted that the Norsemen discovered America, because they lived so long in Greenland and were enterprising sailors. The incidental mention in the Icelandic annals of the Greenland ship that had sailed to Markland and drifted without anchor to Iceland in 1347 had more weight with him than the story of the sagas. This seems to have been one of many regular occurrences that was accidentally recorded. He regards the description of the first meetings with the natives as a strong evidence of the real visits of the Norsemen. He does not believe that a saga-teller who had not seen the natives and observed their ways could have given a description of their traits that is so true and vivid. With regard to the comparative value of the incidental information and the story of the saga we differ with Nansen. We believe that the incidental information that Nansen accepts from various sources is in complete accord with the sagas when they are read as the Norsemen intended them to be read and understood. It is only when we reject the realistic traits of the sagas and accept an imaginary and fabulous geography in the manner of Storm, Björnbo and Nansen that we can find a resemblance between the sagas and St. Brandan's voyages.



## WILLIAM HOVGAARD

**I**N the fall of 1914 a book on the Vinland voyages was published by William Hovgaard, late commander in the Danish Navy, and at present professor of Construction in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The work is supplied with several maps, has numerous excellent illustrations and discusses in an entertaining way the different phases of this question, such as life in Iceland, the discovery of Greenland and its historical remains, shipbuilding and navigation in the North, the texts of the Vinland sagas, the geography of the east coast and the location of Vinland<sup>7</sup>. We shall consider only the sailing routes which Hovgaard proposes.

So far it has been the practice to place the corresponding lands mentioned in the two sagas on the same parallels. Thus the first land that Bjarne saw on his voyage northward lies about on the same parallel as Leif's Vinland and Karlsefne's Hop; Bjarne's second landfall corresponded to Leif's and Karlsefne's Markland and Bjarne's third land to Leif's and Karlsefne's Helluland. Hovgaard has broken up this understanding and assumes three sailing courses of unequal length along the east coast. One reaches from Grinnell Glacier in Baffin Land to southern Newfoundland. Another reaches from Grinnell Glacier or northern Labrador to northern Newfoundland. And again another goes from Grinnell Glacier to Rhode Island. There is no evident gain in thus cutting up the courses, but it rather tends to give the impression that the visits of the Norsemen were so hurried and superficial that they were unable to keep the lands distinct from each other and that there was no common understanding as to where the different lands were located. If the

Norsemen themselves were not able to keep the different lands apart from each other, it is no wonder that we after so many centuries should experience some difficulty in locating them. Inasmuch as the narratives do not call for any dislocation of the courses and no advantage is gained by cutting them up, it is well to abide by the time-honored practice.

According to Hovgaard Bjarne first saw land off Newfoundland and then off the Labrador coast and had his third landfall off Grinnell Glacier, whence he sailed east south-east to Herjolfsnes in Greenland. Going in the opposite direction in the course that Bjarne had described, Leif found Helluland in Baffin Land, Markland in Nova Scotia and Vinland in New England.

Already by this arrangement we see that Hovgaard's method is loose and that he has not grasped the real purpose of the saga. Considering the care with which he has done the rest of the work, it is a bit surprising to find so little insight into sailing courses in a trained navigator. He does not seem to have recognized that in a book dealing with the Vinland voyages it is a matter of prime importance to have the courses right.

Bearing off to the southward from Disco Island, supposed to be Björneø, in Greenland, Karlsefne according to Hovgaard found Helluland in the neighborhood of Grinnell Glacier or the Four Peaks in North Labrador, Markland near Nain or Davis Inlet in Middle Labrador, Kjalarnes at Cape Bauld and Hop in White Bay, New Foundland. With Helluland and Kjalarnes fairly located, Hovgaard should have seen through the rest and mastered the situation, but unfortunately he changed the text and got beyond his depth. Going south the saga has in succession: Markland, Furdustrandir, Kjalarnes, Straumfjord and Hop, which he changed to Markland, Straumfjord, Furdustrandir, Kjalarnes and Hop. Had he observed the order in the text he might have obtained good results. By not thinking through the entire situation he has brought about a hopeless confusion.

From Eiriksfjord Karlsefne sailed to Vestribygd, thence to Björneø far up the west coast of Greenland, between

Godthaab and Disco Island. Thence he bore off to the south and came to Helluland either at Grinnell Glacier or at Four Peaks in North Labrador. Then he found Markland at Nain or Davis Inlet and Straumfjord at Sandwich Bay and followed the Furdustrandir to the Strait of Belle Isle. That this coast has no sandy strands and has an abundance of excellent harbors while Furdustrandir had long sandy strands and no harbors, does not seem to bother the author. Proceeding on his voyage southward Karlsefne came to Kjalarnes at Cape Bauld and Hop at Sops Arm in White Bay. There are several reasons why Sops Arm cannot be Hop. The winter there is as severe as in Labrador; the bay and coast are covered with ice and snow for miles out upon the sea, and fish and game leave this coast in the fall as they did at Straumfjord. From Sop's Arm to the west coast the distance is about 35 miles. In their daily excursions from the camp the Norsemen must either have reached or at least seen the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Yet when they sailed along the west coast the following summer, they thought they saw the land of the Unipeds in the interior and were uncertain whether they had seen the same mountains from Hop. Had they spent one year at Sops Arm they would not have been in doubt about either.

Hovgaard's location of Straumfjord at Sandwich Bay leads to strange inconsistencies. From Sandwich Bay Thorhal Veideman sails northward along the Labrador coast in search of Leif's Vinland. By sailing northward he would come to Helluland, but not to Vinland. In the saga he passes Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir, which lie south of Sandwich Bay. In his course northward Thorhal encountered a gale from the west which drove him to Ireland. Though Karlsefne had accompanied Thorhal as far as the island and had seen him sail away to the north, he strangely enough, in searching for him, turns his prow southward and seeks to find him on the west coast of Newfoundland. It is exceedingly strange for the captain of the expedition to send his pilot northward and then seek him to the southward. This alone is enough to show that Straumfjord was not at Sandwich Bay.

## STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE

THE Strait of Belle Isle is about 73 miles long and 26 miles wide between Battle Harbor and Cape Bauld, so wide that one can not see across. It becomes narrower toward the west and is only nine miles and a half at Point Amour near the west end<sup>s</sup>. A ship coming from the north along the coast does not perceive land on the opposite side before it is over against Cape Norman. The Labrador coast consists of a low range of hills about 200 feet high, that slope gently toward the sea with many safe harbors. One observes along the coast many remarkable sights, which the saga might have mentioned and thereby settled some of our doubts regarding the visits of the Norsemen. Had they for instance mentioned the Batteries at Red Bay or the Castles in Chateau Bay we would here have had another point of departure. Icelandic literature takes little interest in landscapes and scenery. On the Newfoundland side they call attention to something of a practical nature.

As the ship follows the Labrador coast and passes from harbor to harbor, one sees from the deck a great deal of the coast. The opposite coast is so far away that one perceives only a low white strand in the distance. Crossing at the west end the steamer comes to a long and dangerous shore marked by many wrecks. I had long desired to inspect this coast, regarding which I had found it impossible to obtain definite information. At St. Johns I spoke with people who had been there, and on a trip around New Foundland in August, 1914, I had occasion to examine it more closely. I made the trip in company with Mr. J. F. Fries of Toronto, South Dakota. As the boat steamed off to the south, we went ashore at Flowers Cove. For going east we found

no conveyance. The boats were out fishing and horses are not found on this coast. We were told that there was a horse at Eddys Cove, 18 miles east; but on arriving there we learned that in the spring, after a short and sad existence on this lonely shore, he had died of cold and dampness. Nor had they proper roads. From Flowers Cove to Cape Norman there is a foot path which crosses creeks and streams by fords and is often imperceptible. At most of the houses we saw from six to fifteen dogs and several dogsleighs, which are unused in summer. In winter the natives drive on the ice that covers the strait and on the hard snow that reaches above the tree-tops and allows full sweep to their favorite sport. At times one sees a team or two of reindeer from St. Anthony, where Dr. Grenfell keeps a large herd from Lapland.

As the next boat was to go south the following Sunday and we had six days at our disposal, we decided to go on foot rather than to lie idle. If we could make 18 miles a day, we could go to Cape Norman and back before the next steamer arrived. All went well; Wednesday afternoon we had tea with the keeper of the lighthouse at Cape Norman, Mr. Alex. W. Campbell from the west coast of Cape Breton, and reached Cooks Harbor in the evening; Saturday afternoon we returned hale and hearty to Flowers Cove after a journey of 104 miles.

The air was cool and clear and we saw easily the Labrador coast all the time. We could count upwards of a score of icebergs every day. Some were so large that they stuck to the bottom of the strait, which has a depth of 30 fathoms. No grain grows on this coast. If the season is favorable, potatoes, carrots, turnips, rutabagas, rhubarb and parsnips ripen there. They were beginning to keep a few cows, which the women favored. The men complained that if they were to take care of the fishing they found little time to cut hay, which is scarce; but the women retorted that they could find time if they wanted to. The fact is, that the hazardous and uncertain trade of fishing seems to unfit men for regular work. In the winter the cows feed partly on fish. The coast abounds in fish, but the fishermen could only dispose of the cod. There was no market for

halibut. The men fish in summer and trap in winter. The fish flakes along the water's edge and the skins nailed to the outhouses to dry testify to their two pursuits.

The entire coast from Flowers Cove to Cape Norman bears the name Straight Shore. To safeguard the traffic the Canadian government maintains three lighthouses on this coast, one at Flowers Cove, another at Cape Norman and a third at Cape Bauld 18 miles farther east. The shore



STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE

runs nearly in a straight line, 45 nautical or 52 land miles from Flowers Cove to Cape Norman. The first 18 miles have a few curves or open bays which they call coves and where they keep their fishing boats. Around these coves at the west end lie some small fishing villages; but from Eddys Cove to Cape Norman, a distance of 34 miles, there is neither harbor nor fishing village. In two places I saw a couple of houses; otherwise the coast is completely deserted. For lack of harbors the coast steamers turn back at Cooks Harbor and Flowers Cove. Between these points, 55 miles apart, fish and provisions are carried in small boats.

This entire shore has a substructure of limestone which crops out in broken layers along the shore and projects as shelves under the water and makes a dangerous coast. Beyond there is deep water. The strand consists of gray sand, which at the water's edge is usually fine and becomes coarser higher up. Toward the top are found only pebbles with sand underneath. Farther back lie masses of small stones which the ice and billows have crushed. The whole beach has a grayish appearance and looks at a distance like sand.

In a few places west of Cape Norman lie great heaps of limestone, which the sea has crushed into small bits and piled into huge drifts. They are probably forty or fifty feet high and several hundred feet long. With the exception of Cape Norman and a couple of other places where the projecting layers of limestone stand like a wall against the sea, this whole beach is sandy, the western part is very sandy. Dr. Grenfell, who is Superintendent of the International Deep Sea Mission and who has sailed these waters for 22 years, assured me at St. Johns that this was a sandy beach from Flowers Cove to two miles east of Cape Norman. Seen from the ship's deck at some distance from the shore it looks like a sandy beach and one would take it to be a sandy beach. With the exception of Cape Porcupine Strand, which is ten miles long, there is, he said, no sandy beach of any length till you come to southwestern Nova Scotia. Dr. Grenfell is familiar with all these shores and takes an interest in the Norse question, which he has touched upon in his book on Labrador. Later I met Dr. Grenfell on the boat to Battle Harbor and with him went over the whole question.

From a few feet above the sea-level at the west end the shore rises to 61 feet at Cape Norman and continues southward in springy mosses and swamps at apparently the same level. At the west end the neighboring land is a little higher. The eastern part is generally high and stony, bare and forsaken, and finally ends in a stony desert about the nes. The western part is wooded with a low and dwarfy growth of firs. On account of the prevailing wind at certain seasons the trees bend eastward. In the most exposed places

instead of growing up into the air they follow the ground. I saw firs five or six feet across and only from twelve to eighteen inches high. East of Cape Norman and around Pistolet Bay we again found some timber.

This coast is so lonesome and monotonous that one tires of it. All points and curves on the shores are so much alike that one does not seem to advance, though he walks all the time. There are no hills or mountains in the background to catch the eye, only the low coastline and nothing against the sky. Such this coast looked no doubt to the Norsemen in the beginning of the eleventh century, when they called it Furdustrandir, "because it was so long to sail past." Kjalarnes receives frequent mention and is a landmark in the sagas. Thorvald Eiriksson coming from the west is driven upon the nes in a storm and breaks the keel of his ship. When they had repaired the vessel in Cape Cove they carried the old keel on top of the nes and set it up as a warning to other vessels. Thence they sailed eastward along the land (*austr fyrir landit*) and came to the east coast. Thus Kjalarnes can not be Cape Bauld, because that is the northeast point and one can not sail farther east along the land. Furthermore Cape Bauld is an island with a passage for ships between the island and the mainland, while Cape Norman is the landsend (*andnesi*) toward the north. A few years later Karlsefne follows the coasts, as we have described them, crosses the strait at the west end, follows the long and sandy Straight Shore and finds at length on the nes the keel that Thorvald and his men had raised there.

As soon as one passes the Cape the coast is broken by bays (*þá górdist landit vágskorit*). There is a long succession of coves and bays to the east coast. First we have a small and wooded cove almost under the cape, called Cape Cove or Normans Cove, whence a road leads up to the lighthouse. That this cove was fairly well wooded in former times, appears from the number and sizes of the stumps. Then we have Wild Bight and Cooks Harbor, before we come to Pistolet Bay, which reaches fourteen miles southward. Eastward lie Ha-Ha Bay, Island Bay, Noddy Bay and Quirpon Bay. If there were no bays west of the nes,



there is no scarcity on the east side. In one of these bays Karlsefne anchored his ships and put two Scotch runners on shore to examine the land to the south. They returned with an ear of shore wheat and what they thought was a bunch of grapes, but it was probably squash berry, which grows in the neighboring woods.

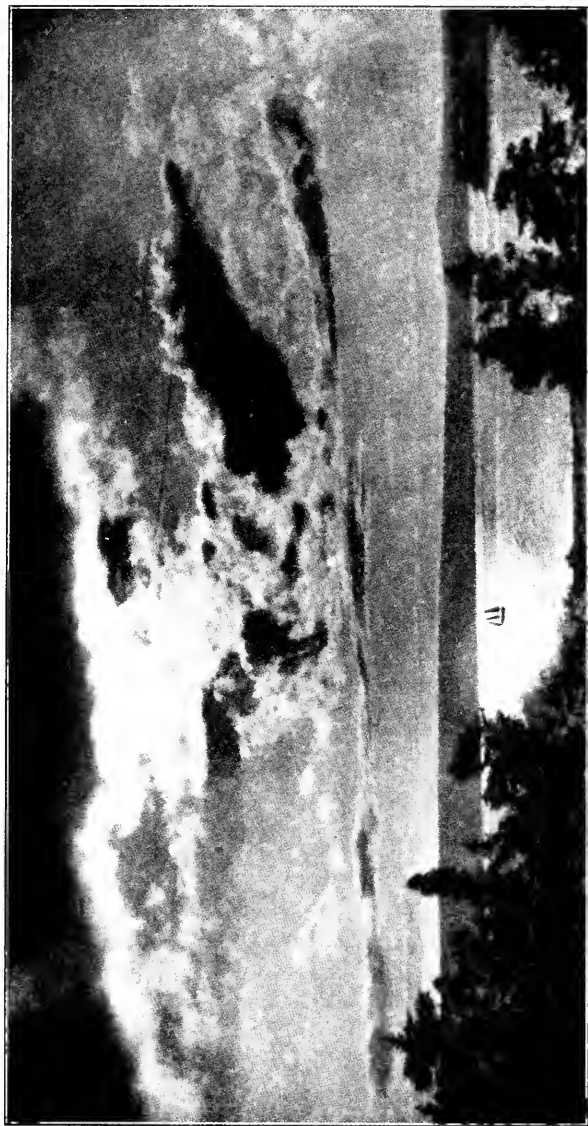
My contention is, that Cape Norman is the ancient Kjalarnes and the Straight Shore west of it are the Furdustrandir. If we are to make any progress in the study of the Vinland sagas it is necessary in the first place to identify and locate some of the names in the sagas. Of these Kjalarnes appears to me to be the most important one. All ships pass in the neighborhood of it and all sailing routes radiate from it. It is, so to speak, at the cross-roads of travel in the new world. Writers have called several capes Kjalarnes and in that way confused our knowledge of Norse geography, and admit thereby that the Norsemen themselves did not have any accurate idea about the location of these lands. The Icelandic geographies present a definite and systematic knowledge of the New World, which is in accord with the sagas. The Vinland sagas are narratives of discoveries and not treatises on geography.

Writers seem to have hesitated to let the Norsemen pass thru the Strait of Belle Isle, because in the age of discovery the strait was late to be noticed. English and Portuguese navigators frequently passed along the east coast without observing the Strait of Belle Isle. But the conditions were different. These navigators had comparatively large vessels and kept at a safe distance from the shore and saw the land from far out at sea; they supposed that the opening to the strait was a bay like so many other bays along Newfoundland and passed it unobserved. The Norse navigators, on the other hand, had small boats and hugged the shore rather closely and found themselves in the strait almost before they knew there was a land opposite.

## LABRADOR

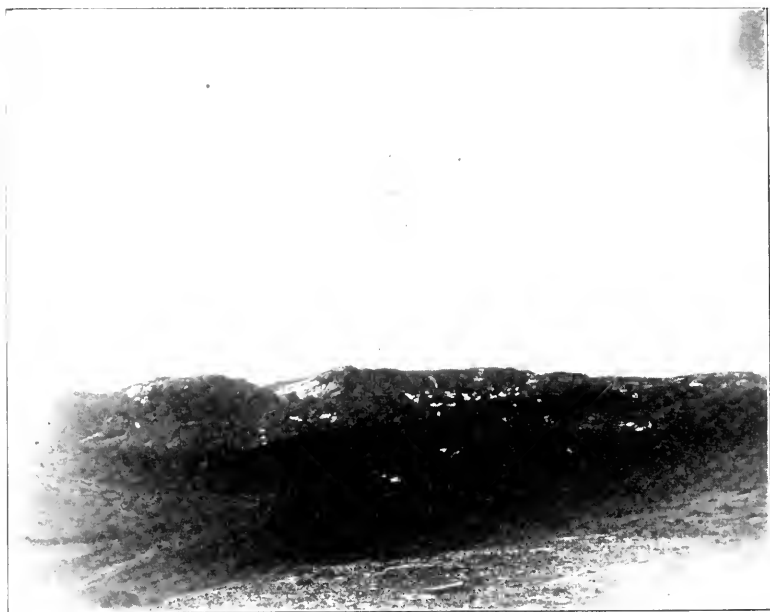
THE Labrador coast from Battle Harbor on the Strait of Belle Isle to Cape Chidley is said to be about 700 miles, and as a ship goes it is generally thought to be about 800 miles long. If we should take into account the numerous fjords and bays that indent the coast, the length would be three or four times greater.<sup>9</sup> Along the entire coast lies a range of mountains pushed close out to the sea. In the northern part it is high and steep and in many places rises almost directly out of the sea. In the southern part the coast is comparatively low, having an average height of about 500 feet. The lowest stretch is along the Strait from Red Tickle to Blanc Sablon, where the hills are about 200 feet high and slope gently to the sea with many excellent harbors. From the coast range the land rises gradually to the watershed, which is several hundred miles away.

Though the coast in southern Labrador is often cut up by rivers, bays and fjords that go far into the land, yet all the heights and islands are nearly of the same level and the whole country has the appearance of being flat and level.<sup>10</sup> Travelers speak of the flowing outline of the south Labrador coast.<sup>11</sup> In spite of the many hills and valleys the top level is nearly always the same, and one has the impression of seeing the beginning of a great plateau or plain<sup>12</sup>. When one sees from the deck of the ship these islands and heights, an endless succession of hills and valleys, it appears at first to have a very broken surface; but when the coastline is seen at dusk or in the bright moonlight when the details fade away and only the masses loom up, the coast seems to have a continuous line that has no break. The saga calls it even or flat—not low—and in



MOONLIGHT GLIMPSE OF THE LABRADOR COAST

so far agrees with modern travelers. "From the deck of a schooner or steamer coursing several miles offshore the hundred visible hills of the coast-belt are seen to accord so closely in elevation that the general sky-line is notably flat. The flatness would scarcely be more pronounced if some miraculous shovel were to fill in the valleys."<sup>13</sup> In the Strait the sky-line comes down and the hills finally disappear largely in the sand dunes at Blanc Sablon. Southern or flat



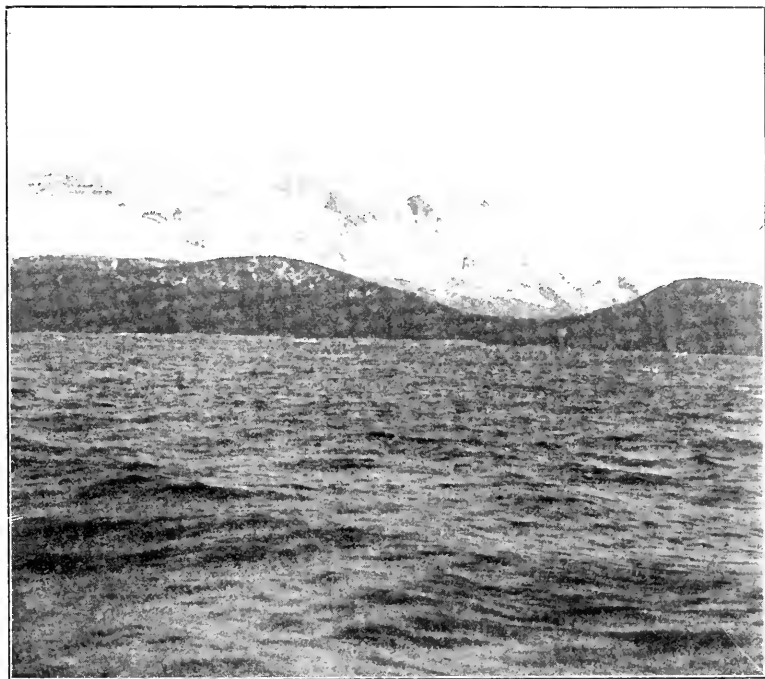
AT PORT MANVERS, AUGUST 12

Labrador reaches from the Strait past Hopedale, which is 350 miles north of Battle Harbor.

Northern Labrador has a high and bold appearance. The loftiest mountains on the east coast of North America lie there. They reach back into the interior less than fifty miles and heap themselves up along the coast. Though they have neither the extent nor the height of a big mountain range, they make a great impression, because they lie close to the sea and rise almost perpendicularly out of the water. While other mountains rise from a plateau or from lower

ranges and in that way a part of their size is lost to view, the entire height of these mountains is seen at a glance, as they loom out of the sea<sup>14</sup>. The large patches of snow seen about their tops and their naked sides rising into the sky without forest or vegetation only enhance their size.

At Nain the cliffs along the coast are high; at Port Manvers, in latitude 57°, they reach a height of



KIGLAPAIT, SEPTEMBER 11

2000 feet; but at Cape Mugford, in latitude 58°, they climb to 3000 feet and convince the traveler that he has come into a new land. There are three mountain ranges in north Labrador. Some fifteen miles north of Port Manvers lies east and west a chain which is called Kiglapait, or the Great Sierra. From the sea one can count ten peaks ranging from 2500 to 4000 feet. Fifty miles farther north, in latitude 58°, lie the Kaumajet, or White Mountains, so named because they are usually covered with snow. This

range terminates in the mighty promontory of Cape Mugford, which rises as a bare cliff almost straight out of the sea with large masses of snow above<sup>15</sup>. It is an island and is separated from the mainland by the narrow Mugford Tickle. Cape Mugford is a landmark about which captains and fishermen along the coast had something to say. The Newfoundland and Labrador Pilot calls it "the most remarkable and unmistakable land on the Labrador coast." Near it lies the still higher Bishops Mitre, also with patches of snow. Many other snowy peaks lie along the coast to the northwest. The photographs shown of north Labrador are taken in the month of August, when the extent of the snow is least.

This, in my opinion, is the third land that Bjarne saw on his way north. He says that this land was "high and mountainous with frozen snow on top (ok jökul á)." Leif speaking of the same land says that they saw no grass. Large patches or fields of snow lay in the upper parts; but it rose like one cliff from the sea to the frozen snow (sá þar eigi gras. Jöklar miklir varu alt hit efra, enn sem ein hella væri alt til jöklanna frá sjonum). If the saga here had meant to speak of glaciers, or skridjöklar, as some writers have thought, these would have reached from the tops down to the sea. Barren sides rising like one cliff from the sea to snowy tops are common sights in north Labrador and can be duplicated in many photographs taken along the coast<sup>16</sup>. The word *jökul* is often used for ice or frozen snow and needs not mean glacier. Several photographs from the Brown-Harvard Expedition, which passed this coast between August 10 and September 11, show large masses of snow on the mountains. Snow fell at Hebron September 8.

The stretch from Cape Mugford to Cape Chidley is the grandest along the whole coast. There lies a range 150 miles long and reaching to Cape Chidley, which the Eskimos call Torngats, that is, evil spirits. Ten miles south of Nachvak Bay we have for example Gulch Cape from 2000 to 2500 feet high. Then comes Mount Razorback about 3500 feet. On both sides of Nachvak Bay the mountains rise above 5000 feet. Fifty miles farther north lie

the highest peaks in Labrador, the so-called Four Peaks, which no one has climbed. They are said to be about 7000 feet above the sea<sup>17</sup>.

Neither grass nor trees grow on the Labrador coast north of Cape Mugford. Even south of this Cape one seldom sees on the coast trees of any size owing to the cold Labrador current, which carries with it large masses of ice and chills the land. Five or ten miles from the sea,



NATCHVAK BAY, FROM HILLSIDE ABOVE HUDSON'S BAY CO. STATION, SEPTEMBER 1

around the heads of bays, one finds trees of a larger growth; the interior of Labrador is said to be rich in timber. The Brown-Harvard Expedition reports that they saw on St. Charles River, in latitude  $52^{\circ}$ , forests of firs ten feet high and they were told that on St. Lewis Bay in the same latitude there grew firs large enough for ship timber; in the same bay in 1914 I saw a great many trees ten inches in diameter. In Aillik Bay,  $55^{\circ}$ , they saw willows ten feet and firs thirty feet high. In Makkovik Bay they saw firs fifty feet high. At the Hopedale mission there is a birch grove and at Nain a fir grove. The Moravian mis-

sion reports that in 1773 they ran a sawmill by water power at Nain. Bishop Martin said that twenty-five years ago, when he first came to Nain, an Eskimo woman eighty years old told him that when she was a girl the whole hillside used to be covered with timber. Now, however, this is all gone. Davis Inlet, in latitude  $56^{\circ}$ , a station of the Hudson's Bay Co., is well supplied with forests, which grow far up the hillsides. According to A. P. Law forests in southern Labrador are continuous north to latitude  $53^{\circ}$ , except on stony heights and on the outer islands of the Atlantic. North of latitude  $53^{\circ}$  the higher hills are treeless and the barren areas increase<sup>18</sup>. In latitude  $55^{\circ}$  more than half the country is treeless, woods being found around lakes and in valleys. The northern limit of trees along the coast is latitude  $58^{\circ}$ , where small trees grow in protected places at the heads of the inner bays.

The barren islands and the bare headlands of the coast have given people a false impression of Labrador, which south of Hamilton Inlet is well timbered about the heads of the larger bays and on the lowlands of river valleys. Hamilton Inlet is rich in timber and was still more so before the destructive forest fires ravaged there. Where the fires have not reached, the trees are much larger. The thousands of fishermen annually frequenting the Labrador coast have also done great damage.

Thus the contrast between South and North Labrador is clearly marked. South Labrador is comparatively low and flat; the surface of the land continues at the same level as far as the eye can reach; it produces grass and a limited amount of forests. North Labrador is high and jagged; the surface is broken by high mountains and deep valleys. Although it has no glaciers, patches of snow remain all the year around and snow falls in the mountains in all months of the year. It is devoid of grass and trees and all vegetation. The transition takes place about Port Manvers, between Nain and Cape Mugford, the latter being clearly in North Labrador.

The sagas recognize a difference in the character of North and South Labrador and call it by two names, Helluland and Markland. Helluland is the useless stoneland of high,



snow-capped mountains where grow neither grass nor trees. Markland is the land where trees and grass grow and which appears flat and even to the eye. Both sagas show that Kjalarnes is the most northerly point of the land, which Thorvald visited and Karlsefne explored. Sigurd Stephanson calls it Promontorium Vinlandiae and that is correct, when we thereby mean Karlsefne's Vinland. The sagas as well as the Icelandic geographies show that there is a sea north of Kjalarnes and that ships pass it east and west. While the Icelandic geographies say that there is a short distance, meaning a narrow sea, between Markland and Vinland, they never mention a sea between Helluland and Markland. A superficial reading of the sagas has given the impression that Helluland and Markland are islands in the ocean; but that is a misunderstanding and, if true, would of itself establish that the sagas were myths. When the ships in Homer go from place to place along a coast, they are said to sail the boundless ocean. By a similar form of poetic expression the ships in the sagas seem to traverse an ocean, when as a matter of fact they follow the coast for a comparatively short distance. A more careful investigation of the sagas will rather show that we have to do with a continuous coastline. I shall call attention to some stretches where the sagas make the ships follow the coast. If we can thus by statements from the sagas account for most of the coasts in question, it disposes for good of the idea that Helluland and Markland were supposed by the Norsemen to be islands. That Adam of Bremen speaks of Vinland as an island comes from the fact that he could not conceive of any thing else in the western ocean.

From the first to the second land, that is, the east coast of Newfoundland to the Strait of Belle Isle, Bjarne kept the land on the left and the sail toward the land. From Bjørnø in Hamilton Inlet to Kjalarnes in the Strait Karlsefne sails "along the land." From Helluland to Bjørnø in Hamilton Inlet Karlsefne sailed southeast, which there is the direction of the coast. Regarding the other directions I shall merely say that they either correspond to the direction of the coast or it is said that they sailed along the land. The narrative shows that it was their practice to follow the

coast where it was possible. The mistaken claim that Vinland was located in Rhode Island has cut the narrative loose from all safe moorings and sent it adrift upon a sea of speculation.

The description of North Labrador, or Helluland, given by the sagas does not fit South Labrador. We can not say that South Labrador is useless and without benefits, since it has grass and forests. Though for us coming from the south all Labrador may seem barren and forsaken and we may agree with Cartier that Labrador was the land that God gave to Cain, still we must admit that it would appear different to people coming from Greenland.

In the old accounts Labrador is usually called Helluland and Markland. But, because they together make up one land, it is at times called Helluland or Markland. Gripla says that it is not far from Helluland to Vinland, while it is usually stated that it is not far from Markland to Vinland. AM. 770c says that north of Vinland lies Markland and then there are obygdir and again obygdir to Greenland. Björn Jonsson of Skardsá, who probably followed sources now lost, states that south of Greenland lies Helluland or Markland.

The location of Helluland and Markland to the southwest of Greenland I shall take up in the next chapter in connection with the general geography of the North.

In regard to Labrador it will be of interest to touch upon a matter which has not been fully examined, but which seems in itself to be likely and natural. The Eskimos have a tradition which seems to point to a European race having visited their coast<sup>19</sup>. H. J. Rink has told the legend according to German sources. I shall tell it as I heard it from Moravian missionaries in 1914.

In olden times there lived among the Eskimos a people whom they called Tunit. They appear to have come from the St. Lawrence valley and to have settled on the islands of the east coast without penetrating into the country. Later they went north to Greenland. They were tall and strong. Like the Eskimos they dressed themselves in skins, but with this difference that the Eskimos turn the hair out, while the Tunit turned the hair in. The Tunit used to skin the seal

*Labrador*



ESKIMOS AT HEBRON



KOGARSUK RIVER, NACHVAK BAY

with the blubber on the skin, which to the Eskimos seemed a dirty way.

Those who first told this legend supposed that the Tunit people were the present Greenland Eskimos, while in truth they are an old legendary people about whom the Greenland Eskimos also tell legends.

As proofs of the former existence of the Tunit people the Eskimos in Labrador point to a number of ruins along the coast. These houses, they say, are built of stone and not in their manner. Ruins of this kind occur along the whole coast, but especially off Nain ( $55^{\circ}$ - $56^{\circ}$ ) and on the island of Amitok ( $59^{\circ}$   $30'$ ). Bishop C. A. Martin at Nain said that he once showed to Eskimos pictures of Norse houses in Greenland, as they are drawn in Nordenskiöld's book, and that they immediately replied that there were similar ruins off Nain on some islands. As these ruins are in the neighborhood of wooded islands and as the country about Nain had some forests in former times, it is likely that the Norsemen obtained timber there.

Graves have been found along the Labrador coast which do not seem to be of Eskimo origin. The Eskimos have no care for their dead. These graves have walled sides and are covered with slabs to protect the dead from wild beasts.

Dr. Grenfell reports that he has found on high cliffs along the coast very old buildings, which seem to have been used for signal towers or lookouts. If on examination these buildings should be built on the same principle as the beacons or lookouts in Greenland, we should find a connecting link between the Norsemen in Greenland and in Labrador. Since Greenland is so near, it is evident that if the Norsemen reached the mainland at all they must have found Labrador.

*Labrador*



FROM MOUNT FAUVE, NACHVAK BAY



FROM MOUNT FORD, NACHVAK BAY

## THE NORTHERN GEOGRAPHY

FOR the correct understanding of the Vinland sagas it will now be necessary to take up the geography of the northern countries from which the explorers set out. We shall have to locate a few places in Greenland and elsewhere before we can follow the explorers on their voyages to new lands<sup>20</sup>.

Outside of the two settlements in Greenland there were large tracts of wastes or deserts which they called *obygdir*. On the east coast were extensive *obygdir*. The Polar current which follows the land carrying with it much ice, chills the coast and renders it uninhabitable and almost inaccessible<sup>21</sup>. The northern part of this coast seems to have borne the name Svalbardi, or the cold coast. Gripla, an old Icelandic geography, mentions three *jöklar*, or glaciers on the east coast. One is so far away that it can not be explored; another is a month's journey away; to a third is a journey of one week. The last is called Hvitserk and is nearest to the (East) Bygd. Nansen, who has visited this coast, thinks he can associate the three *jöklar* with three glacier regions, one in 67°, another between 63° 40' and 65° 36' and a third in 62° 20' N. If, however, *jökul* means snow mountain, as Ivar Baardsson and Björn of Skardsá used the word, Mid-jökul or Bláserk would be Ingolf's mountain in 65° 25', which is 7,300 feet high and is the first object seen as one comes from Iceland. It is a landmark on this coast and was first seen by Eirik the Red. With the exception of the southern bays, which abounded in fish, seals and bears, the Norsemen seldom visited the east coast. Sometimes they were shipwrecked and forced to take refuge among the icebergs. The Floamanna saga tells how Thorgils

Orrabeinsfostre lost his ship on this coast. After many dangers and sufferings the survivors worked their way southward along the coast past Hvarf and came at length to the East Bygd. This touching account gives a vivid description of the trials and hardships which the settlers in Greenland had to pass through in those times.

The East Bygd, beginning with Herjolfsfjord, a little west of Hvitserk, continued northward to Isafjord and west to Ivigtut. This was the larger bygd and had in its most flourishing period twelve churches and one hundred and ninety homesteads. It included nearly the present Julianehaab District as far as Ivigtut. North of the East Bygd there was an uninhabited tract of about 200 miles before reaching the West Bygd. This settlement had only four churches and ninety homesteads. It included the present Godthaab District.

North of the West Bygd were found vast obygdir. All the big homesteaders in Greenland had large ships and vessels which they sent north for the Nordrseta in the summer to get timber and all kinds of game. Although trees do not grow there, they found on the coast much driftwood, which the currents brought from Siberia or from North America and deposited there. The Norsemen thought that this driftwood came from the bays of Markland. As seals were more abundant in the north, they were in the habit of preparing seal tar in the Nordrseta. There they also caught wolves, bears and reindeer. These Nordrseturmen had their booths or huts at Greipar or on Kroksfjardarheide. Since driftwood gathers mostly at Holstenborg and a short distance northward, it seems likely that Greipar and Kroksfjardarheide were in the neighborhood of Holstenborg. We hear that the Skraelings came across at Kroksfjardarheide, because the distance there was least. As Davis Strait is narrowest at Holstenborg, we have another reason for locating Greipar and Kroksfjardarheide there. As the name Nordrseta implies, these places were in the north and these obygdir are always spoken of as situated far in the north. Grönlendingar hljóta jafnan siglingar at hafa norðr at obyðum á landsenda þann norðara eðr skagann bæði til víðar ok afla bragða. Rafn, page 276. Gunnar foru i Greipar norðr,

Grönlands er þar bygðar sporðr, Skutu rendi norðr um sjo; reru ok sigldu norðr i Greipar. Skaldhelga saga, Rafn, page 276.

Still farther north is located the snow mountain which Eirik the Red saw the third summer he was in Greenland. The expedition sent out by the priests at Gardar in 1266 saw a snow mountain one day's rowing north of Krokshjardarheide.<sup>22</sup> How far north the Norsemen were able to penetrate, we do not know definitely. A runic inscription found in 1824 near Upernavik shows that they reached 72° 55' 20". The expedition of 1266 seems to have gone farther north. They speak of Davis Bay as hafsbotn, implying that (they thought) it was a bay and they saw land to the south.

Besides the obygdur which we have mentioned the sagas speak of a Vestre Obygd. In the account of Eirik the Red's second summer in Greenland we read in Karlsefne's saga AM. 544: Hann var þat sumar i Vestri Obygd; AM. 557: i hina vestari obygd; Landnáma: i ena vestri obygd; Flatteyrbok: i hina vestri ubygd. Likewise two paper manuscripts have this reading. Most of the paper manuscripts have i *Vestri Bygd*, which all commentators have accepted. They seem to think that as long as the West Bygd was unsettled it was an obygd. Yet the usual meaning of obygd is a place that can not be inhabited (obyggjanda). Still all the texts read Eystri Bygd, although that too was unsettled at this period. It is plain that the later copyist did not understand Vestri Obygd and changed it to Vestri Bygd, which he understood. Since the obygdur north of the West Bygd are always called northern or lying in the north they can not at the same time be in the west or be the Vestri Obygd. Nor does the Vestri Obygd correspond to the tract lying between the two Bygds. There are no other obygdur in Greenland.

My opinion is that Vestri Obygd means Baffin Land. The second summer that Eirik the Red was in Greenland he sailed westward and came to Baffin Land. He remained there a long time and gave names to places far and wide. As he had sailed west from Iceland the summer before, he now sailed westward from Greenland to learn whether there were other lands in the neighborhood. The course to



the Vestri Obygd lay from the West Bygd. The distance is about 200 miles and could easily be made in two days in good summer weather.

That Vestri Obygd is Baffin Land appears from many references. Baffin Land was discovered in the lifetime of Eirik the Red and before the voyage of Karlsefne to Vinland. The saga relates that Karlsefne sailed from Eiriks-fjord to Vestri Bygd and thence to Bjørneø. From Bjørneø they sailed two *doegr* south and came to Helluland. Since Bjørneø lies north of Helluland, it must lie west of Greenland, or where we find Baffin Land. The learned Odd Jonsen cites a variant in this place: Sigldu þeir síðan ut frá landi i vestari obygdir. Thereupon they sailed from land to the western obygdir. It may be of interest to know that scholars have been of the opinion that this saga was originally in narrative verse and that it was afterwards transcribed into prose. According to Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker this line ran as follows: Sigldu þeir síðan undan landi i obygdir vestir. Sailed they thereupon from land to the western wilds.

Thus Bjørneø and Vestari obygdir appear to have been the same place and to have lain two *doegr* north of Helluland, or North Labrador. A paper manuscript gives the distance from West Bygd to Bjørneø as two *doegr* also, which, if reliable, is fairly correct. In AM. 544 West Bygd, Bjørneø and Helluland are co-ordinated as stations on the way to Vinland and should be about equidistant from each other. Thus the old sagas give a fairly correct location of Helluland, or North Labrador. When they chose the course that Karlsefne took they sailed two *doegr* west to Bjørneø and two *doegr* south to Helluland. When, however, they chose the course across the sea from the East Bygd to North Labrador, as Leif and Thorvald did, then the distance from Herjolfnes to Helluland was four *doegr* to the southwest. Karlsefne could not have chosen the course by West Bygd unless Baffin Land had previously been discovered.

The saga states that Thorhal Veideman, the old pilot of Eirik the Red, joined the expedition because he was acquainted in the obygdir. Gustav Storm is of the opinion

that these obygdír are those on the east and north coasts of Greenland, where the Greenlanders were wont to fish and hunt in the summer. Thorhal was in all likelihood familiar with the obygdír both in the east and the north of Greenland, but what was worth while in this case was, that he was acquainted in the Vestri Obygd, which was located on the way to Vinland. That he had been fishing east and north of Greenland would only give him a general acquaintance with obygdír, which nearly all Greenlanders possessed.

On the Vinland voyages the Norsemen gained knowledge of a long series of lands that lie in a line north and south, Newfoundland, Labrador and Baffin Land. How much farther north they reached, we do not know definitely. In 1266 the priests at Gardar sent a ship north to learn where the Skrælings had their haunts<sup>23</sup>. From Kroksfjardarheide, where the distance to Baffin Land was supposed to be shortest, they sailed (westward) till the land was out of sight. Then a storm from the south struck them and they had to run before the wind. When the storm ceased and the sky cleared, they found themselves among islands far up the west coast of Greenland, where they saw seals, whales and many bears. Then they went right into the bay (*hafsbotninn*) and lost sight of all the land, both the southern coast and the glaciers (of Greenland); but south of them (in Baffin Land) they descried also glaciers, as far as their eyes could reach. They found signs that the Eskimos had lived there in former times, but were unable to land for fear of the bears. Thereupon they sailed back in three *doegr* and found signs of Skrælings south of Snæfell, which lies one day's rowing north of Kroksfjardarheide.

This account shows that the Greenlanders had knowledge of a land west of Davis Bay. That they supposed it to join Greenland in the far north is natural. That the Vestri Obygd did not receive a name of its own seems also to indicate that it was thought to be a part of Greenland. The conception seems to have been that the haunts of the Skrælings were to the west in Baffin Land and that from there they crossed over into Greenland where Davis Strait was narrowest.

A similar conception we gain from the *Historia Nor-*

wegia written in the second half of the thirteenth century. The author, not having seen Greenland, follows the maps of the period and gives to Greenland a southwesterly slant from Bjarmaland. In order to maintain the land connection with Russia and not make it too long in some cases they laid Greenland almost east and west. From this it follows that Baffin Land, which lies to the west of Greenland, will be supposed on those maps to lie to the north. In *Historia Norwegia* we are told that some sailors who wanted to return from Iceland to Norway were driven in a storm into the foggy north and there found the lands of the giants and of the Amazons between the Greenlanders and the Bjarmer. Frozen mountains separated the giants (Risir) from the Greenlanders. But to the north over against the Greenlanders hunters have found some small people whom they call Skraelings. These do not know the use of iron, but use the teeth of sea animals for spears, and sharp stones for knives. As the giants are the neighbors of the Greenlanders in Greenland, it would seem that the Skraelings over against them lived in Baffin Land. This is about all that we know of Greenland from historical sources.

In course of time, as the shipping decreased and the people lost interest in the real lands that they had discovered, there grew up a false and perverted idea of unreal and imaginary lands. The mythological sagas of the 14th and 15th centuries speak of Northern Greenland as a strange land inhabited by trolls and giants. Far north of Greipar and Kroksfjardarheide Greenland widened and continued as wastes and deserts, obygdur, as far as Bjarmaland in Russia. They told a story that a man called Halli Geit had made his way on foot from Greenland to Bjarmaland. He had with him a goat and lived of its milk, and they picked their way through valleys between glaciers. The character of the land was Icelandic with jökuls and lava fields (*varu fyrst jöklar ok þá toku við brunahraun stor*). On this account they called it Helluland (stoneland) or Hellulands obygdur, which we must not confound with the historical Helluland on the way to Vinland. This mythological Helluland appears to lie northwest and north of Iceland. The obygdur that joined North Greenland from the south

lay west of Davis Strait and Bay. In Kroka-Ref's saga we read that the Icelander Ref went to North Greenland. He sailed past Hvítserk and then followed the west coast of Greenland northward. Far in the north he came to a fjord where the glaciers turned southward into the sea. The coast seemed to bend westward to encircle the bay. At the head of the fjord he built a hut. Later he sailed to the West Bygd, where he lived eight years. On account of murder he had to flee back north into the obygdir. There he built a block-house and lived with his four sons, till his enemy Gunnar from the West Bygd discovered him.

The Icelandic geographies give us a similiar geography and throw further light on the situation. One of these, AM. 770c, which the eminent scholar Björn Jonsson copied from an old parchment, begins with the southernmost and enumerates the lands northward to North Greenland, then he goes around Davis Bay, mentions the two Bygds in Greenland proper and finally the east coast and bays as far as Hálogaland in Norway.

On the west side of the great ocean, which reaches from Spain and which some call Ginnungagap, that spreads among the lands, are named northward first Vinland the Good, next is named Markland still northward, then are the obygdir, where the Skrælings live; then are yet obygdir as far as Greenland and there are two bygds, the West Bygd and the East Bygd; but thence there are bays (hafsbotnar), jökul mountains and obygdir which turn toward Hálogaland.

Fyrir vestan hit mikla haf frá Spania, er sumir kalla Ginnungagap, þat ganga landa imilli þá heitir til norðrs fyrst Vinland hit góða, þarnæst heitir Markland enn til norðrs, þá eru obygðir er Skrælingjar byggja; þá eru enn obygðir til Grænlands, ok eru þar tvær bygðir, Vestrbygð ok Austrbygð, en síðan eru þá hafsbotnar, jökla fjöll ok obygðir eð vikr við Hálogaland. Rafn, *Antiq. Amer.*, p. 296.

The Icelandic geographer here names in order the lands along the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland to Norway. As I understand the passage the geographer mentions first Newfoundland, then South Labrador, then North Labrador and then Baffin Land, which terminates in North Greenland. Then he passes around Davis Bay and comes in Greenland

proper to the two bygdir, the Vestri Bygd and Eystri Bygd, and then going around Hvitserk he mentions on the east coast sea-bays, glacier mountains and wastes all the way to Norway. Barring the statements that Baffin Land joined North Greenland and that North Greenland reached into Russia, which was beyond their sailing and belonged to the domain of fancy, the description given by the old geographer is in the main correct and corresponds to our knowledge of those parts.

Another part of the same manuscript, AM. 770c, has the same conception and names the same lands from north to south. Greenland here means North Greenland without excluding Greenland proper. Lying south of North Greenland we have Baffin Land, North Labrador, South Labrador and Newfoundland.

Now there is, as stated, south of Greenland, which has bygds, deserts, obygdir and jökuls, then Skrælings, then Markland, then Vinland the Good; next to it and a little back lies Albania, that is Hvitramannaland; thither formerly were sailings from Ireland; Irishmen and Icelanders recognized there Are, the son of Mar and Kotla from Reykjanes, who had not been heard of for a long time and who had become a chieftain in the land.

Nu eru, sem sagt var, suðr af Grænlandi, sem bygt er, óræfi, obygdir ok jöklar, þá Skrælingjar, þá Markland, þá er Vinland hit góða; þarnæst ok nokkut til baka ligger Albania, þat er Hvitramannaland; þangat var sigling ur Irlandi forðum; þar þektu yrskir menn ok islenzkir Ara Mars son ok Kötlu af Reykjanesi, er lengi ekki tilspurðist, ok þar var þá til höfðingja tekinn af landsmönnum.

The well known geography, Gripla, which Björn Jónsson copied, has the same conception. It enumerates the countries in order from Bavaria to Vinland. In dealing with northern countries it starts with Bjarmaland in Russia and describes the wastes that stretch all the way to Greenland. As it does not mention the West Bygd and the East Bygd, it is plain that this excursion goes only as far as North Greenland. From North Greenland the geographer goes back and takes a new start from the continent of Europe and follows the supposed coast of Greenland along the North

Atlantic. At Hvitserk (Cape Farwell) he turns north to visit the East Bygd and West Bygd. From the west coast of Greenland he passes over to Baffin Land, which lies over against the bays of the west coast. Lastly he enumerates, as lying south of Baffin Land, Helluland, Markland and Vinland. I shall cite only what concerns us here:

North of Norway lies Finmarken.—Then the land turns northeast till one comes to Bjarmaland, which is tributary to Gardaríki: From Bjarmaland lie wastes (obygdir) northward to Greenland. But in front (toward the sea) lie bays and the land (east coast of Greenland) turns southwest, there are jökuls; and fjords and islands lie in front of the jökuls; one jökul they can not explore; another is a half month's journey away; a third is a week's journey away; the last is nearest the (East) Bygd and is called Hvitserk; then the land (the west coast) turns north; he who does not want to miss the Bygd must steer southwest. Gardar is the name of the bishop's seat at the head of Eiríksfjörð. There is a church dedicated to St. Nicholas; there are twelve churches in the East Bygd and four in the West Bygd in Greenland.

Now is to be told what lies over against Greenland opposite the bays that are mentioned: the land is called Furdustrandir. There the cold is so intense that it is not habitable, as far as men know; south of it lies Helluland, which is called Skrælingjaland; thence it is but a short distance to Vinland the Good, which some suppose is projecting from Africa; between Vinland and Greenland is Ginnungagap, which comes out of the sea, which is called Mare Oceanum, and surrounds the whole world.

Finnmörk (liggr) norðr af Noregi; þá vikir til landnorðrs ok austrs, áðr en kemr til Bjarmalands; þat er skattgilt undir Gardaríki: Frá Bjarmalandi liggja obygdír norðr allt til þes, er Grænland kallast. En botnar ganga þar fyrir ok vikir landinu til utsuðr, eru jöklar ok firðir ok eyjar liggja uti fyrir jöklunum; fyrir einn jökulinn geta þeir ekki ransað, fyrir annan er halfs mánaðar ferð, fyrir þriðja vikuferrð; er sá næstr bygðinni; þar heitir Hvitserkr; þá vikir landinu til norðrs; en sá eigi vill missa bygðina, stefni hann í utsuðr. Gardar heita biskupstol í botninum á Eiríksfirði;

þar er kirkja vígð hinum helga Nicholas; XII kirkjar eru á Grænlandi í hinni eystri bygð, III eru í vestri bygð.

Nu er at segja, hvat til mots við Grænlandi gengr ur þeim botnum, sem fyrir eru nefndir: Furdurstrandir heitir land, þar eru fröst mikil, svá ekki er byggjanda, svá menn viti; suðr frá er Helluland, þat er kallat Skrælingjaland; þá er skamt til Vinlands hins góða, er sumir menn ætla at gangi af Afrika; milli Vinlands ok Grænlands er Ginnungagap, þat gengr ur hafi því, er mare Oceanum heitir, þat hverfr um allan heim.

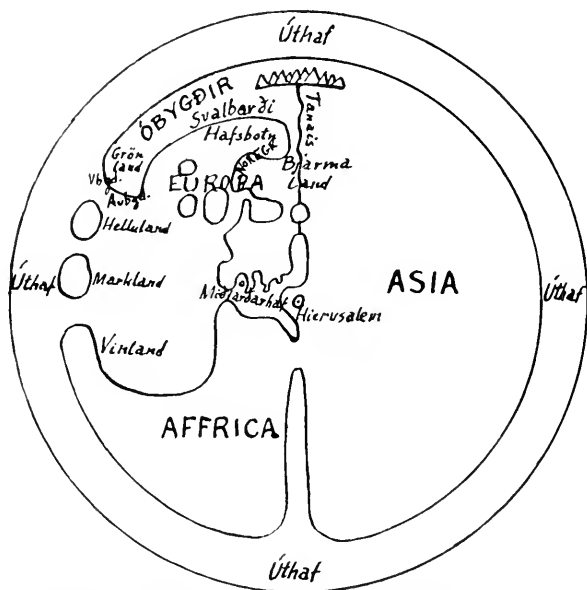
In this geography we see that Helluland does not lie to the south of Greenland proper with its two bygds, Vestri Bygd and Eystri Bygd, but south of Baffin Land, which is here called Furdurstrandir and is not habitable and corresponds to Vestri Obygd. Unfortunately Baffin Land did not receive a name, because it seems to have been looked upon as a part of Greenland, and on that account was forgotten long before Helluland, Markland and Vinland. Furdurstrandir was not a name and means only the dangerous strands. The geographer calls all Labrador here Helluland, which, as far as we know, has always been the home of the Skrælings (Eskimos). Thus Gripla places on a line north and south Baffin Land, Labrador and Newfoundland and further west than Greenland. Between Vinland and Greenland lies Ginnungagap, an arrangement which also shows that Vinland lies farther west than Greenland.

We come next to four short fragments of an Icelandic geography which have generally been accepted on their face value as giving us the Norse conception of Northern geography. From these four fragments Storm thought that he could prove that Helluland, Markland and Vinland lay south of Greenland. One of these fragments he thought was very old and probably went back to Abbot Nicholas of Thingeyri (d. 1159), who is known to have traveled much. Working under the same delusion A. A. Björnbo constructed an absurd and impossible map of these regions. The map of Sigurd Stephansson, dated 1570, conveys a far more correct idea of the Norse conception and the relative location of the different lands<sup>24</sup>.

AM. 192. Af Bjarmalandi gánga lönd obygd of norðrætt,

unz viðtekr Grænland. Suðr fra Grænlandi er Helluland, þá er Markland; þá er eigi langt til Vinlands ens goða, er sumir menn ætla at gáangi af Afrika; ok ef svá er, þá er uthaf innfallanda á milli Vinlands ok Marklands.

AM. 736. Frá Bjarmalandi gánga lǫnd til obygdæ of norðrætt allt til þess er Grænland tekr við. Frá Grænlandi i suðr liggir Helluland, þá Markland; þaðan er eigi langt til Vinlands, er sumir menn ætla at gáangi af Afrika.



THE NORSE CONCEPTION OF THE EARTH ACCORDING TO A. A. BJORNØ

AM. 764. Af Bjarmalandi gánga lǫnd obygd af norðrætt, unz Grænland tekr við. Suðr frá Grænlandi liggir Helluland, þá Markland. þaðan er eigi langt til Vinlandz.

AM. 194. Suðr frá Grænlandi er Helluland, þá er Markland: þaðan er eigi langt til Vinlandz ens goða, er sumir menn ætla at gánga af Afrika ok ef svá er, þá er uthaf innfallanda á milli Vinlandz ok Marklandz.

AM. 192. From Bjarmaland extend desert lands northward till Greenland begins. South of Greenland is Helluland, then is Markland; thence it is not far to Vinland the Good, which some think goes out from Africa; and if



that be so, then the outer sea enters between Vinland and Markland.

AM. 736. From Bjarmaland extend desert lands northward until Greenland begins. South of Greenland lies Helluland, then Markland; thence it is not far to Vinland, which some men think goes out from Africa.

AM. 764. From Bjarmaland extend desert lands northward, until Greenland begins. South of Greenland lies Helluland, then Markland. Thence it is not far to Vinland.

AM. 194. South of Greenland is Helluland, then is Markland: thence it is not far to Vinland the Good, which some men think goes out from Africa, and if it is so, then the outer ocean enters between Vinland and Markland.

It is related (further) that Thorfin Karlsefne cut a husasnotra and went later to find Vinland the Good, and came there, where they supposed that the land was, but did not acquire any knowledge of it nor obtain any of the riches of the land. Leif the Lucky was the first to find Vinland and then found merchants in distress at sea and by God's mercy saved their lives, and he introduced Christianity into Greenland.

Three of these geographical fragments, AM. 192, 736 and 764, start out from Bjarmaland and pass over wastes or obygdur, to the mythological North Greenland, which included Baffin Land as its Vestri Obygd. Continuing from Greenland they go on south to Helluland, Markland and Vinland. The shortest fragment, 194, begins with Greenland and goes on like the other three south to Helluland, Markland and Vinland. In form and wording they are all nearly alike, so that there can be no doubt that all four come from the same source. It is agreed that some of them are from the fourteenth century and, if one or more is authentic, they are all authentic, as they are all essentially the same in form and contents. Whatever be their ultimate origin, they seem to come from some accepted outline used in giving instruction in geography. The method followed was to start at a given point and to mention the lands in succession to the end of the run. As stated above, the Gripla starts with Bavaria and mentions the lands in succession northward to Bjarmaland and the uninhabited tracts to

North Greenland. Then taking a new start from Norway it follows the east and west coast of Greenland proper and crossing over to Baffin Land, or Furdustrandir, it connects with the former run in the Vestri Obygd (Baffin Land). Continuing from there it places Helluland, Markland and Vinland to the south. If we compare the four fragments in question with Gripla, we shall see that they, as far as they go, are almost identical in form and wording and conception. But the passages describing the east and west coasts of Greenland proper and Baffin Land have dropped out. The



MAP OF SIGURD STEPHANSSON

scribe, it seems, coming from Bjarmaland to the mythological North Greenland, omitted the passages having to do with the East and West Bygd and Furdustrandir and went on to mention Helluland, Markland and Vinland. This procedure was open to misunderstanding; but brought on no difficulty for several centuries, as we see from the map of Sigurd Stephansson and the writings of Björn Jonsson of Skardsá. It was only in recent years, when the Norse conception of the northern geography was completely misun-

derstood, that this error cropped out. This comparison with the Gripla brings out also the important fact that it too comes from an original as old as any of them, which has been doubted.

There remains one Icelandic geography, *Grænlandiæ Vetus Chorographia*, which has hitherto been considered so obscure and confused that little use has been made of it. Finnur Jonsson<sup>25</sup> prints the text without comment. It was copied by Björn Jonsson from a very old codex and is not preserved in any other copy. It fills in the part of the geography of Greenland which the four preceding fragments omitted. After a few general remarks it starts on the east side of Greenland and mentions a number of places on the south point, and gives a long list of fjords and churches in the East Bygd. Then it seems to have treated the West Bygd in the same way, but for some reason Björn Jonsson failed to copy the fjords in the West Bygd. It is possible that the Ms. was in such a condition that he could not read the names of the fjords, which, however, are known to us from other sources. Finally this geography crosses Davis Strait and gives us a few names of localities in Baffin Land.

For our purpose this geography is of the utmost importance, because it shows the sailing route from the West Bygd to Baffin Land and confirms the sailing directions in the *Karlsefne* saga. Another point of great value is the indication of distances by days' rowing. No one has been able to obtain any sense from this passage, although the meaning is perfectly obvious. The text says that from *Bergþorsfjord*, which is the most northerly fjord in the East Bygd, it is six days' rowing with six men in a six-oared boat to the West Bygd, then instead of copying the fjords in the West Bygd, as he had done in the East Bygd, Björn remarks, (*þá telr þar upp firði*) "here are enumerated the fjords." If instead of Björn's remark we insert the ten fjords in the *Vestri Bygd*, as they are known to us from other sources, the statement becomes plain. Thus it appears that from *Eyrarfjord* in the extreme north of the West Bygd to *Lysufjord* in the south the distance was six days' rowing, and again from *Lysufjord* to *Karlbuda* (in Baffin Land) was another six days' rowing.

## GRÆNLANDIÆ VETUS CHOROGRAPHIA

Grænland horfir í vtsudur. Syndst er Herjólfssnes, enn Hvarfs-gnipa næst firir vestann. Þængad kom Eyrekur hinn Raudi leingst og liest þæ kominn firir botn Eyreks fiardar. Þar er stiarna er hafhverf heitir á austann verdu landi, þæ Spalsund þæ Drangey. þæ Solvadalur hann er bygdur austast. þæ Tofafjörðr þæ Melrackanes. þæ Herjólfss fiardar kirkia, þæ Hellis ey ok Hellis eyiar fjörðr. þæ Ketils fjörðr, tvær kirkjur, þæ hrakbjarnar ey Lund-ey, Syllenda af Eyreks-firdi, þæ Alptafjörðr, Siglufjörðr kirkia, Hrafnshjörðr. þæ geingr Sliettuf. af Hafursfirdi, Hornafjörðr, ófundinn fjörðr. Þar er Byskups stóll (þæ verdr hann að vera í botni Eyreksfiardar) þæ Eyreks fiardar kirkia, af honum geingr austkarshjörðr kirkia, Hafgrímshjörðr. Hvalseyafjörðr H-f. H-f. H-f. ur Dyrnesi, þæ isafjörðr, þar af geingur Utibliks f. þæ Stranda f. þæ eru Midfirder næst bygder (bygdum), þæ heitir einn kollu f. annar dyra. f. þæ Þorvaldzshjörðr. Steins-fjörðr. Bergþors f. þæ er VI daga röðr VI mönnum til vestre bygðar sexæringi (þæ telr þar upp firdi) þæ er úr himni vestre bygð til lysu fiardar VI daga röðr. Þadan sex daga röðr til Karlbüda, þæ III dag(a) röðr til Biarneyar XII daga röðr umhverfiss—ey Eisunes Adanes firir norðann.

## OLD CHOROGRAPHY OF GREENLAND

Greenland (as seen from Iceland) turns toward the southwest. Most southerly is Herjólfssnes and Hvarfs-gnipa next on the west. There Eirik the Red went farthest and is said to have gone to the head of Eiríksfjörð. On the east side of the land where it is called Hafhverf (sea district) is Star (the sounds come together in a five-pointed, star-like figure), then Spalsund, then Drangey. Then Solvadal, it is built farthest east. Then Tofafjörð, then Melrackanes. Then Herjólfssfjörð's church, then Hellisey and Hvalseyafjörð. Then Ketilsfjörð, two churches, then Hrakbjarnarey, Lundey, Syllenda of Eiríksfjörð, then Alptafjörð, Siglufjörð church, Hrafnshjörð. Then Sliettufjörð goes out of Hafursfjörð, Hornafjörð, Ofundfjörð.

There is Bishop's seat (then it comes to be at the head of Eiriksfjord), then Eiriksfjord's church, from it goes Austkarsfjord church, Hafgrimsfjord. Hvalseyrfjord. H—f. H—f. from Dyrnes, then Isafjord, thence goes Utibliksfjord, then Strandafjord, then the Midfjords are built nearest. Then one is Kollufjord, another Dyrafjord, then Thorvaldsfjord. Steinsfjord. Bergþorsfjord, then there is six days' rowing with six men in a six-oared boat to Vestre Bygd. (Then the fjords are mentioned from south to north). Then is Lysufjord, Hornafjord, Andafjord, Svartifjord, Agnafjord, Rangafjord, Leirufjord, Lodinsfjord, Straumfjord and Eyiarfjord. Then there is from that (most northerly fjord of) Vestre Bygd back to Lysufjord six days' rowing, thence to Karlbuda (in Baffin Land) is six days' rowing, then there are three days' rowing to Bjarney, twelve days' rowing round—ey Eysunes adanes on the north side.

As the distances south and north are already given, the distance to Karlbuda must needs be westward. The generally accepted identification of Karlbuda with Disco Island far up the coast of Greenland we see is impossible. The Bjarney mentioned in this passage is no doubt the island from which Karlsefne set sail for Helluland. It belonged to the Vestri Obygd. This passage alone seems to furnish conclusive evidence that the Norsemen discovered Baffin Land.

As it appears from this investigation, all the Icelandic geographies are agreed that Helluland and Markland lie south of Baffin Land and consequently southwest from Greenland proper. Even the mythological sagas, which are fictitious, assign to Helluland the correct location. Though the stories are fictitious, the geography, as in our novels, may be reliable. In *Ørvar-Odd's* saga we are told that they sailed into the Greenland sea and then southwest to Helluland: *Síðan sigla þeir þartil er þeir komu í Grænlandshaf: snua þa suðr ok vestr fyrir landit—sigla þeir nu þartil er þeir koma til Hellulands, ok liggja inn á fjorðinn Skugga.*

The same view we find also in a paraphrase of the *Karlsefne* saga, AM. 770c: *Hann (Karlsefne) sigldi suðvestr*

fyrir Grænland, þartil landkostr batnaði meir ok meir. That the Flateyrbok places Helluland in a southwest direction from Greenland appears from the course that Bjarne Herjolfsson steered from the mainland.

In passing I shall also refer to the celebrated Björn Jónsson of Skardsá. Although he lived several centuries after these events, he was extremely well versed in the old sagas and had access to many sources which are now lost. In *Bardar saga Snæfellsáss* he makes the following remark regarding Greater Helluland or North Greenland: þetta kollum vær norður obygdur Grænlandz ok norður Grænland ok Helluland hit mikla. This we call the wastes of Greenland and North Greenland and Greater Helluland.

Regarding the northern wastes which continue into Baffin Land he says: hier heyrast at kalladr ero Grænlands obygdur einnir hier norður i landnordurshafi, lyka sem vestur Grænlands, obygdur millum vestre bygdar á Grænlandi ok litlu Hellulands edur Marklands. Here we hear that they are called Greenland's obygdur even north there in the north-east sea, they end as the obygdur of West Greenland between the West Bygd in Greenland and Little Helluland or Markland. The land lying on the way from Godthaab to North Labrador can only be Baffin Land. Baffin Land seems somewhat elusive, because it has so many names. Björn calls it Vestur Grænlands obygdur, *Vetus Chorographia* calls it *Karlbuda*, *Gripla Furdustrandir*, and the old sagas *Vestre Obygd*.

The existence of Baffin Land in the geography of the North is not only important in itself as showing the reach of the Norsemen toward the west; but it is indispensable for the understanding of the sagas and explains in a satisfactory way why Karlsefne sailed to Vinland by way of the West Bygd. In order to view the sagas in the right light, we have now reviewed all the known geographies. To get the right point of view it is necessary to take all these things into consideration. Rafn went astray by making too much ado about the mythological sagas. He allowed North Greenland to reach ten degrees farther south than Cape Farwell and to continue over Baffin Land and Labrador to

the Strait of Belle Isle. Storm went astray by placing Helluland, Markland and Vinland south of Greenland, thus distorting the entire geography of the sagas. As long as the conception of the lands from which the expeditions set out were so misty and uncertain, one could hardly expect that any definite agreement could be reached concerning the newly discovered land. It is manifest that the Vinland sagas were plain and evident to the Norsemen, because they had a definite knowledge of the places mentioned. We also will be able to read them with the same interest if we are able to solve the difficulties connected with the local names. The uncertain geography of the north has made the sagas appear sort of intangible.

The far-reaching discoveries of the Norsemen toward the west had enlarged the geography of the world. Before the advent of the Norsemen geographers had only a faint knowledge of lands north of the British Isles. But as soon as the Norse settled the Faroes, Iceland<sup>26</sup> and Greenland, they brought them to the knowledge of the rest of the world and introduced them into commercial intercourse with western Europe. The outer ocean, which is supposed to surround the whole world, was henceforth thought to pass beyond Greenland. This view we find expressed in the King's Mirror and on the Clavus Nancy map of 1427. But the Norse discoveries on the coast of America fared differently. They had little or nothing to offer which commerce then required and for that reason did not get into touch with Europe. The sagas mention as advantages in Vinland that the soil was good and that the land abounded in timber, game and fish of all kinds; but there was no lack of these things in western Europe at that time, and the way to Vinland was long and dangerous. The author of the King's Mirror, who gives us a full and thorough description of Greenland and Iceland, does not even make mention of Helluland, Markland and Vinland. Beyond Greenland and Iceland the Norse discoveries on the east coast of America were barely known. The Icelandic geographies, however, furnish many descriptions of the east coast of America, which agree with the sagas and tally with our present knowledge of these

localities. West of Greenland lies Baffin Land, which the Norsemen called Vestre Obygd, and which they thought joined Greenland in the far north.

To the south lay Labrador, which they called Helluland and Markland. Not far from Markland, with a narrow body of water between, was situated Vinland, beginning at Kjalarnes and extending southward no one knew how far. Karlsefne had gone south as far as Straumfjord and Hop. What conditions prevailed farther south they had no knowledge of, as they had not gone farther. As far as they sailed and were acquainted, the land was on the west and the ocean on the east. A couple of geographies state that some were of the opinion that Vinland was a continuation of Africa. But that was only a hypothesis or theory, which they could not verify. Still this theory is important, as it shows us the difference between what they knew and what some supposed. They knew that Hop (Vinland) was situated farthest south in line with Helluland and Markland and that Africa was south of Europe. Some thought that Vinland connected with Africa in the manner that Greenland continued into Russia. A. A. Björnbo assumes even that this hypothesis was generally accepted and incorporated it into a map, which he supposes conveys the general views. That this was not the only view appears from 770c, where Ginnungagap between America and Europe connects with the great ocean to the south.

Am. 192 draws inferences from this hypothesis as it continues. "If Vinland extends from Africa, then the outer ocean comes in between Markland and Vinland." If the ocean were thus closed on the south and came in only between Markland and Vinland, they must also have thought that the ocean was closed off on the north, which could not be the case if Helluland and Markland were islands as drawn by Björnbo. The supposition was rather that on a line farther west the land was somewhat continuous from Markland to Russia. Since all Icelanders knew that there was no land south of Greenland and that there always had been an open passage for ships past Hvitserk, it is evident that



Greenland in the fragmentary geographies means North Greenland.

From these accounts we see that the Icelandic geographers had in the main a correct idea of the location of the lands in question. It is hardly credible that they could have reached these conclusions and given these descriptions unless they had sailed these waters and seen these shores.

## EIRIK THE RED

THE Vinland voyages begin with Eirik the Red and the discovery of Greenland. As Shetland, the Faroe Islands and Iceland were discovered from the Scandinavian countries, so Greenland now became the starting point for a series of new discoveries to the southwest. From Greenland they reached Baffin Land, then Labrador and points farther south. All Vinland voyages start from Greenland. Greenland is not so far removed from the American continent, but that a good vessel in the summer season can pass from one land to another without serious danger in two to three days. Eirik the Red is the first in a line of Greenland explorers and seems to have possessed rare geographical insight and to have been the soul in these voyages of discovery. He was an able sailor and acted with much tact and prudence. At his home in Greenland were planned all the Vinland voyages. To give expression to the interest that Eirik took in the Vinland voyages one saga relates that he was on the point of taking the command of the first expedition, when he was prevented by a mishap, and the other saga relates that he sailed on the fourth expedition with his son, Thorstein. The lasting achievement of Eirik the Red, however, was the discovery and building of Greenland.

In the discovery of the line of islands that reach from Scotland to Iceland, the Norsemen followed either in the wake of the Irish or they chanced upon them as they drifted about in storms on the ocean. But the finding of Greenland is the first of a series of systematic voyages of discovery. The Norsemen do not follow in the wake of others and they set out with a definite purpose. They go to sea only after collecting all available information and maturing their

plans. Eirik the Red took the lead in these daring enterprises and supported them with word and deed.

Eirik the Red descended from a wealthy and powerful family in Norway. His father's name was Thorvald. Both were obliged to leave Jaederen on account of murder and went to Iceland, which had now been settled for about one hundred years. The best land had already been taken and Thorvald and Eirik settled on the Hornstrands in north-western Iceland. They took land about Drangavik and settled at Drangar, which lies north of the polar circle. By Hunafloi and Hhrutafjord they could reach Haukadal and the district east of Breidifjord. In the long winter nights of this northern clime he had ample opportunity to think and dream of distant lands. From sailors who had been driven far out upon the sea in hunting seals and whales Eirik heard many strange tales of adventures. When he was later forced to leave the country he acts with a decision and resolution that shows that he had considered these matters before. His father Thorvald died at Drangar. The saga does not mention how long they lived in the north of Iceland. Eirik is supposed to have been born about 950 and was now at least twenty-five years old. Now he married Thorhild, or Thjodhild, who before had been married to Thorbjørn from Haukadal. She was the daughter of Jorund Atleson and Thorbjørn Knarrabringa. It is probable that she changed her name to Thjodhild, when she accepted the Christian faith, as Thorhild savored strongly of the most heathen of the northern gods. It stands to reason that they could not call the church that she had built at Brattalid Thorhilde Church. The Flateyrbok, which seems to preserve the older traditions, calls her Thorhild, while the Karlsefne saga, beginning after the introduction of Christianity with the voyage of Karlsefne, calls her Thjodhild. Now Eirik moved to Haukadal and settled at Eirikstad near Vatnshorn lying east of Hvamsfjord and being one of the finest tracts in Iceland. To judge from the many places in Iceland and Greenland that bear his name, Eirik must have been a conspicuous figure in his day. There Eirik lived till about 979. According to one tradition Leif was born there. While they cleared the land, Eirik's slaves

caused a landslide to fall upon the house of a neighbor by the name of Valþjof. To revenge his death Eyjolf Saur, Valþjof's relative, killed the slaves. Eirik thereupon killed Eyjolf Saur and Holmgang-Rafn. Eyjolf's relatives brought complaint against Eirik and he was outlawed from Haukadal. Eirik went westward and took possession of some islands at the mouth of Hvamsfjord in Breidifjord. He lived the first winter in Suderey. He lent Thorgest at



EIRIKSVÁG, EYXNEY IN HVAMSFJORD

Breidabolstad his honor posts. Later he went to Eyxney and settled at Eirikstad. He demanded of Thorgest the return of the honor posts, and when he did not receive them he went in the fall of 980 to Breidabolstad and took them. Thorgest hurried after him and a battle was fought near the fence at Drangar. Besides others, two sons of Thorgest fell here. Feeling ran high, and to safeguard themselves both retained a band of armed men about them in the winter. The *Eyrbyggja saga*<sup>27</sup> mentions the death of Thorgest's two sons, when Eirik carried off the honor posts in the fall, and states that both men retained armed followers and made

several attacks against each other in the winter. The *Flat-eyarbok* states that since Thorgest did not return the honor posts, there were hostilities and fights, as told in the *Eirik's saga* (*gerðust deilur ok bardagar með þeim þorgesti sem segir i sögu Eiriks*). The *Karlsefne saga*, which some think is the lost *Eirik's saga*, mentions only the fight by the fence at Drangar. Styr Thorgrimsson, Eyjolf of Sviney, the sons of Thorbrand of Alptafjord and Thorbjörn Vivilsson, supported Eirik the Red. The sons of Thord Gellis, Thorgeir from Hitterdal, Aslak from Langedal and his son Iluge supported Thorgest. The case came up before the Thorsnes thing in the spring of 981. The meeting was well attended. Eirik was equipping his ship in *Eiriksvág* in Eyxney and was not at the thing. Styr had charge of his interests at the thing and won over as many men as he could from Thorgest. He asked Snorre Gode not to accompany Thorgest against Eirik after the meeting, promising in return to stand by him on some other occasion. On account of this promise Snorre remained neutral in this case. Eirik was outlawed for three years. Thorgest set out with many ships and hunted for Eirik among the islands; but Eyjolf concealed him in *Dimunarvág* till Eirik's friends arrived. When Eirik was ready, Styr, Eyjolf and Thorbjörn Vivilsson followed him beyond the islands. Eirik told them that he had in mind to seek the land that Gunnbjörn, the son of Ulf-Krake, had seen when he was driven westward over the sea. If he found the land he would come back to his friends and would support them as they had supported him, in case he was able and if they needed his assistance. They parted as the best of friends.

Eirik sailed westward from *Snefellsjökul* on the route which since bore the name *Eiriksstefna*. It is possible that he possessed more definite information about a land in the west than the tradition of Gunnbjörn. The decision with which he acted shows that he had carefully considered the subject and felt reasonably certain of good results. Interest in geography was at that time great in Iceland. A man who was interested in geography and discoveries would naturally gather information on that subject where he found it and piece it together in such a way as to make it useful

and serve his end. He found the land and came from the ocean in front of Midjökul, which, as it appears, was later called Bláserk. He followed the coast southward to see whether the land was habitable. Then he sailed westward past Hvitserk and Hvarf and came to what was later called the East Bygd. The first summer he explored the East Bygd. Since his plan was to colonize the country, he endeavored in these three years of exile to become acquainted with the conditions prevailing in Greenland. The first winter he passed on Eiríksey, near the middle of the West Bygd. The



EIRIKSFJORD. FROM BRATTALID

Hauksbok, AM. 544, here reads: near the East Bygd; but the general sense of the passage as well as the reading in the Landnáma favor the West Bygd. In the spring, while the ice yet blocked the sea and only left an open passage along the coast, he sailed back to the East Bygd and into Eiríksfjord, where he chose a homestead for himself. Now he had acquired a general knowledge of both Bygds and was able to make an intelligent choice. In the summer he sailed to the Vestre Obygd, where he remained a long time and assigned names to places far and wide.

Texts of the fifteenth century and later make Eirik pass the first winter on Eiriksey in the East Bygd, select his homestead on Eiriksfjord in the spring and go to the West Bygd in the summer. Late copyists in Iceland have changed Vestre Obygd, which they did not understand, to Vestre Bygd, which was simple and intelligible. To avoid contradiction they then let Eirik spend the first winter in the East Bygd. All editors and commentators favor this reading, which is not in accord with the best and oldest texts. The work of Eirik the Red in Greenland during the three years of exile they divide as follows: The first summer he explores the East Bygd and spends the first winter on Eiriksøy in the East Bygd. The second summer he surveys the West Bygd and the third summer he explores the west coast as far north as Snefell. The Landnáma, which is the oldest and most reliable text, reads: *i ena vestri obygd*; Flateyrbok: *i hina vestri Ubygd*; AM. 557: *i hina vestari ubygd*. The Hauksbok omits these words. My opinion is, that the oldest text is correct and that Vestri Obygd here means Baffin Land. That there is sufficient evidence to support this contention, I have shown elsewhere. This interpretation clears up the difficulty and places the following events in the proper relation to each other. From the West Bygd Eirik again set out upon the sea, as he had done from Iceland, to see whether there were other lands nearby. As the distance is not greater than that one can see land in a couple of days, it is natural to suppose that he made this excursion.

The second winter he passed on the Eiriksholms, near Hvarfsgnipa.

The third summer he sailed all the way north to Snefell. Where Snefell was located is not known. The context shows that it was far north. The report from 1266 mentions a Snefell one long day's rowing north of Kroksfjardarheide. Then he sailed back to the East Bygd and went into Hrafnfjord and thereupon he is also said to have gone to the head of Eiriksfjord. It would seem that he had not before gone to the end of this fjord and that he now explored it and sailed its whole length. This statement has always been taken to mean that Eirik supposed that the Hrafnfjord cut as far or farther into the land than the

Eiríksfjörð. A glance at the map will convince any one that neither Eirík nor any Greenlander familiar with the East Bygd could for a moment have entertained such a notion, the Eiríksfjörð being several times as long. It seems to me that the obvious meaning of the statement is what I have given above. *Grønlandiae Vetus Chorographia* cites merely the statement about Eiríksfjörð without making any comparison with Hrafnfjörð, which is correct. Þængað kom Eyrekur hinn Raudi leingst og liest þá kominn firí botn Eireks fiarðar. The third winter Eirík spent on Eiríksøy at the mouth of Eiríksfjörð. The fourth summer he sailed back to Iceland, came to land in Breiðifjörð and stayed over winter with Ingolf at Holmláter<sup>28</sup>.

After an absence of three years Eirík returned to Breiðifjörð from a successful expedition. With many difficulties and small means he had accomplished a great and memorable work. He had discovered Greenland and with great ability and good fortune had explored unknown and dangerous waters. With a small vessel he had in three years seen as much of Greenland as was known for several centuries after its second discovery. Eirík had already before been a conspicuous figure in the most intelligent section of Iceland. It was well known that he had been outlawed three years before at the Thorsnes thing and that he had sailed westward to search for the land that Gunnbjörn had seen, when he was driven about on the sea, and that he intended to return if he found the land. His expectations had been fulfilled. He called the land Greenland, because he thought a good name would induce people to go and settle it. His plans were now to get people with him and occupy Greenland. He set forth the advantages of the land. It had an abundant supply of game, seals, whales, bears and many other animals. He permitted nothing to interfere with his great object of settling Greenland. He forgot his feud with Thorgerst and made peace. He succeeded in persuading people to join him. In the spring twenty-five ships set out from Breiðifjörð and Borgarfjörð. From this and other sagas we see that there were many dangers connected with a voyage to Greenland. Some of these ships were lost at sea, others returned to Iceland; fourteen reached Greenland<sup>29</sup>.



Eirik the Red made his home at Brattalid. Most of his followers settled in the East Bygd; some went to the West Bygd. Fjords and valleys received their names from the original settlers who were called Landnámamen as in Iceland. Thus arose from the names of the settlers the names Herjolfssfjord, Herjolfssnes, Ketilssfjord, Hrafnssfjord, Solvedal, Einarsfjord, Hafgrimsfjord and Arnlaugssfjord. Sometimes they took their names from places in Iceland, whence the settlers came, as Alptafjord and Siglufjord.



BRATTALID

In the following years we get now and then a glimpse of Eirik the Red in Greenland. He appears to have maintained order and to have governed the land with tact and wisdom. The Icelandic laws were in force in Greenland. The Althing, or Parliament, met at Gardar on the isthmus between Eiriksford and Einarsford. Eirik lived in the style of a chieftain at Brattalid. When ships arrived from Iceland or Norway, he and his followers would mount their horses and ride down to the harbor and trade with them and often he invited the merchants to Brattalid. If powerful chieftains or friends like Snorre Gode, Thorbjörn Vivilsson or Thorfin Karlsefne visited him, he appeared to be extremely hospitable and generous. Gudrid, Thorbjörn Vivilsson's daughter, esteemed Eirik highly. When her father

Thorbjörn and her husband Thorstein were dead and she was left alone in Greenland, Eirik cared for her as a father.

In 999 Eirik's oldest son Leif was grown up and made a voyage to Norway. As sons of noble families in Iceland were wont to do, he went abroad to see the world and to acquire courtly manners. That he sailed directly to Norway without touching at Iceland or the Faroes, shows that this course was already known and that the Norsemen were bold sailors to cut across the ocean without chart or compass. That Leif was the first one to attempt this course, as Nansen assumes, is not likely, though the course is here mentioned for the first time. We hear that he had bad weather and was driven out of his course to the Hebrides and arrived at Nidaros (Thronthjem) only in the fall. When King Olaf Trygvason returned from Hálogaland and settled for the winter in Nidaros Leif met the King and stayed with him during the winter. The king thought much of Leif and had him and his crew baptized and instructed in the Christian faith. Hearing that Leif intended to return to Greenland in the summer, he charged him to introduce Christianity there. The *Flateyrbok* relates that Leif was baptized and stayed with the king in the winter. It does not mention how and when he returned to Greenland, but goes on to say that in the winter of 1001-02 he was in Greenland and visited Bjarne at Herjolfsnes and bought his ship. There can be no doubt as to the course of events. All are agreed that the same summer (1000) king Olaf went to Vendland, Leif sailed to Greenland to introduce Christianity there. That is in fact the story as told in the paper Ms. 770c, which Björn Jonsson copied from an old codex: "Fourteen years afterwards Leif Eiriksson made a voyage from Greenland to Norway, and King Olaf Trygvason had him and his men baptized and he received much honor from the King in the winter; later he sailed back to Greenland to introduce Christianity (með Kristni), and it has maintained itself there since." Thus we should also understand the *Kristni* saga, which is the oldest account that we have of these events: "That summer sailed King Olaf from the country south to Vendland. Then he sent Leif Eiriksson to Greenland to order the faith introduced there; thereupon

Leif found Vinland the Good; he found also men on a shipwreck at sea, wherefore he was called Leif the Lucky." This account does not say that Leif found Vinland on his return from Norway. The events come here in the same order as in the *Flateyrbok*, if we translate þá with thereupon, afterwards, later, as we often do. The *Kristni saga* is about one hundred years older than the accounts which



IGALIKO (GARDAR)

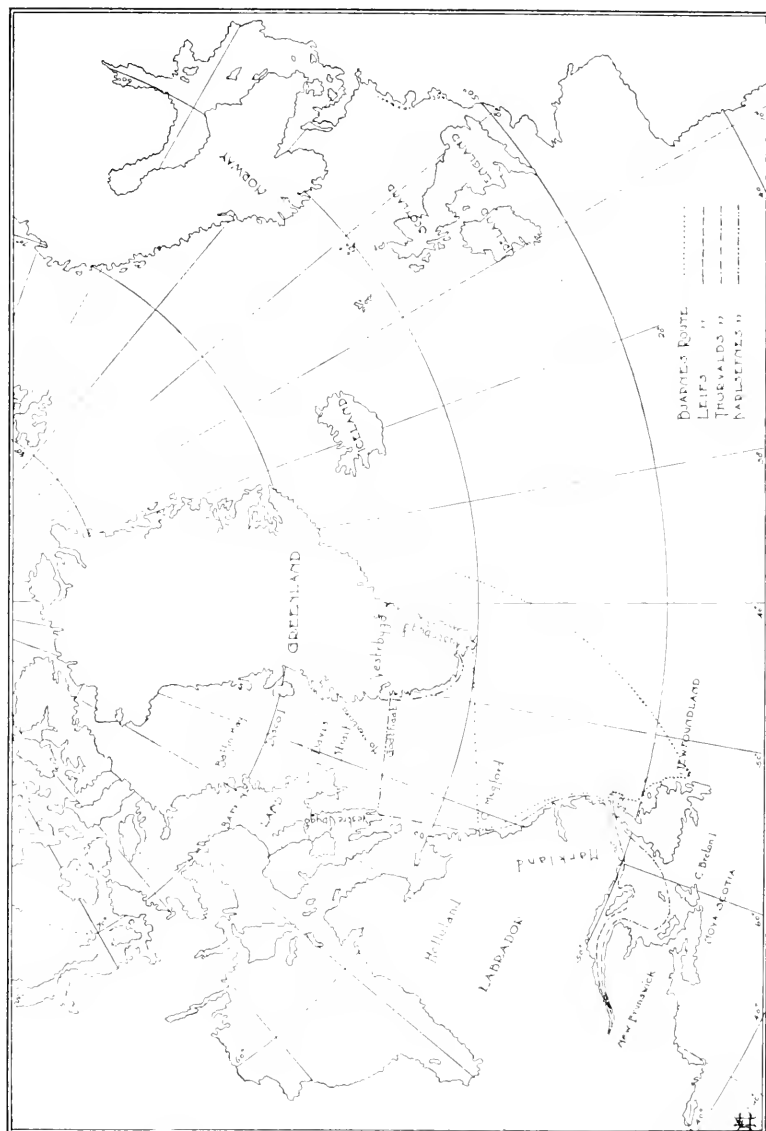
On the left meeting place of the Althing, on the right ruins of the Bishop's House and Cathedral

maintain that Leif found Vinland on his return voyage from Norway.

Regarding the discovery of Vinland two accounts came into existence. One originated in the home of Eirík the Red, was current in Greenland, later migrated to Iceland and appeared there in nearly the form that we now have it in the *Flateyrbok*. The other account grew up in Iceland in the families of Thorfin Karlsefne and Snorre Gode and was based on the oral report which these men made on their return to Iceland. All who have written down the latter account were either related or intimately connected with

Snorre or Karlsefne and show the influence of these powerful families. It is reasonable, therefore, that in matters having to do with Leif and Thorvald, we follow the first account, as it is given in the *Flateyrbok*, and that in matters referring to Karlsefne we should follow the second account, which we have in the *Karlsefne saga*. It stands to reason that each one of these families knew more about their own ancestors than about those of other families. Whenever the *Karlsefne saga* relates the occurrences on Karlsefne's voyage, it is within its own sphere and should be accepted, but whenever it touches upon the story of Bjarne, Leif or Thorvald, it trenches upon the saga that purports to tell their exploits. If we follow a simple rule of this kind, we escape many pitfalls. It is not surprising to find the order of sequence broken in events which have no logical connection and are not controlled by other contemporaneous events.

Leif promised the king to go on his errand. As the king went south on his last voyage, Leif sailed for Greenland and arrived safe at Brattalid, where all were glad to welcome him home. He bade them accept the Christian faith and laid before them the message from the king, who was popular in Greenland. Eirik was slow to abandon his old belief, but Thorhild accepted readily the new faith and at a short distance from the houses had a church built, which after her was called Thjodhild church. All her children accepted Christianity. In Eirik it seems to have been a bit of political shrewdness not to outrun his own people in a matter which he foresaw would conquer in the end. With Norway and Iceland to point back to and the chieftain's family on its side, Christianity made rapid strides in Greenland. Before the end of the year Christianity was probably accepted by most of them, at least outwardly. It required time to change their principles and ways of thinking, but that became the work of the priests<sup>30</sup>. Leif had carried out the order of the king and was now at liberty to take up something else.



## FLATEYARBOK

**B**JARNE was the son of Herjolf and lived between Vaag and Reykjanes in Iceland. Bjarne was a gifted man, took to the sea early and soon won wealth and honor. Every other winter he was either abroad or stayed with his father. The last winter that Bjarne was in Norway, Herjolf broke up his home in Iceland and sailed in the spring with Eirik the Red to Greenland and settled on Herjolfsnes. When Bjarne in the summer landed at Eyrar in Iceland and learned that his father had gone to Greenland, he thought that it was great news. He refused to unload the ship and wanted to keep up his custom of spending the winter with his father, in case the crew was willing to accompany him. All consented and, when they were ready, went to sea. They sailed 3 days till Iceland disappeared under the water. Then the breeze failed them and they got north wind and mists and for many days they did not know where they were. When the storm came on, they lowered the sail so as not to be driven too far out of their course. The following account shows that they must have been east of Newfoundland when the storm ceased and the fog lifted. Nothing indicates that on the voyage northward they sailed in a northeasterly direction past Nova Scotia or 300 miles east past Newfoundland. It is not likely that Bjarne drove past Cape Race, which is the point that projects farthest into the ocean.

In order to have a starting point we shall assume that Bjarne came with an east wind and had his first landfall a little south of 48° N. Sufficient reasons for this assumption will appear in the course of the argument.

Thereupon they saw the sun and recognized the direc-



EAST COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND. NEAR ST. JOHNS



TRINITY BAY, NEWFOUNDLAND

tions. They hoisted sail and sailed that day—as it appears with an east wind—till they saw land. They debated among themselves what land it was. Bjarne said it was not Greenland and advised that they should sail close up to the land. Soon they saw that it was mountainous and wooded and had small heights. They kept the land on the port (left) side and let the sail turn landward.

Thus they turned the prow northward and with the sail turned toward the land, which was on their left, they followed the coast northward. Writers have misunderstood this account and supposed that, as soon as they had examined this land they went again out upon the deep and remained out of sight of land till they reached the second land and there repeated the same performance. If that conception were correct, it would require two or three large islands off the east coast and not a continuous coastline.

Thereupon they sailed two *doegr* till they saw the second land. To Bjarne this did not appear to be Greenland any more than the former; for there are said to be large glaciers in Greenland. They approached the land and saw that it was flat and wooded. The wind fell and the men wished to go ashore to obtain water and fuel; but Bjarne was of the opinion that they did not need either and ordered to hoist sail.

We find in Rymbegla that a *doegr* is equal to two degrees of latitude, or 120 geographical miles. Two *doegr*, then, corresponds to four degrees and takes us into the Strait of Belle Isle. The wind there generally blows in the direction of the strait, either from the northeast or southwest. When I was there in August, 1914, the wind blew constantly for a week from the southwest. As the east wind that brought Bjarne to the strait died away, he found in the strait a southwest wind, that sped him all the way to Greenland.

They hoisted sail, turned the prow from the land and sailed with a breeze from the southwest three *doegr* and saw the third land; but that land was high and mountainous with joces. Neither here did Bjarne want to go on land, since he thought this land was useless. They lowered (shifted) not the sail, held on along the coast and saw that it was an island; still they set the stern against the land and



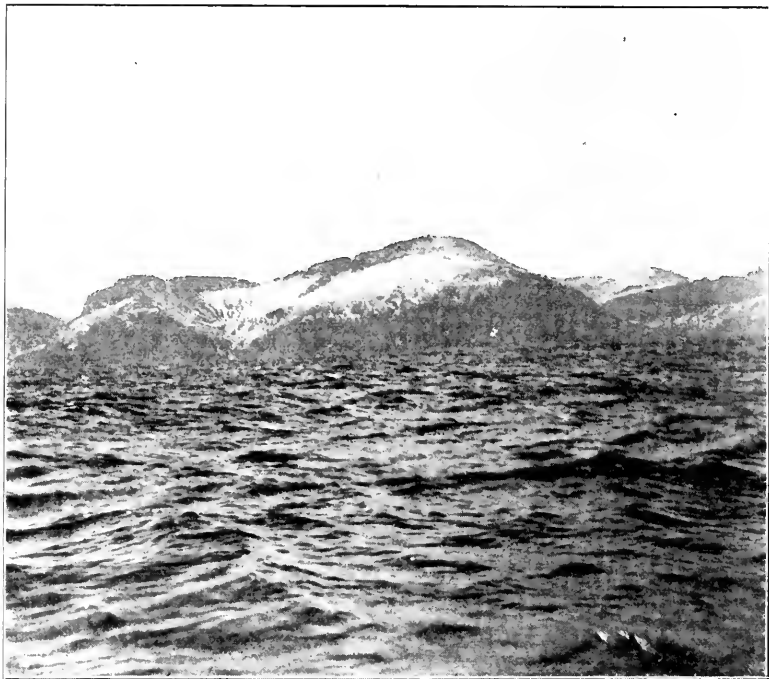
sailed out upon the main with the same wind. As the wind increased, Bjarne ordered to take a reef in the sail and not to sail more than the ship and the rigging could stand. Now they went four *doegr* and saw the fourth land, which Bjarne thought most like what he had heard of, Greenland. They landed at Herjolfsnes, where his father dwelt. Bjarne remained there as long as his father lived and made his home there afterwards.



LABRADOR COAST NEAR CAPE MUGFORD

Bjarne came from the south and, crossing the strait, he pointed the prow of his ship right against the Labrador coast. To continue his course northward and skirt the Labrador coast he had to turn the prow northeast and to set the sail to suit the southwest wind that he found in the strait. Thus they passed southern or flat Labrador and reached at Port Manvers,  $57^{\circ}$  N., the high and mountainous North Labrador. Three *doegr*, or six degrees of latitude, took them to the mighty promontory of Cape Mugford, which lies on an island near  $58^{\circ}$  N. and towers almost perpendicularly 3,000 feet above the sea. Nearby lies the

still higher Bishops Mitre and a row of snowy peaks to the northwest. Between Cape Mugford and the mainland winds the narrow Mugford Tickle, which divides the cape from the mainland and makes it an island. This tallies closely with the description in the saga and clears up a difficult passage. These mountains have much snow at all times of the year. As seen in photographs taken in the



OGUALIK ISLAND. 2,500 FEET HIGH. SEPTEMBER 10

month of August, large masses of snow appear even at that time of the year. As they drew near Cape Mugford, the wind began to fall and the crew wanted to go ashore; but Bjarne refused to lower the sail and held his course through the Tickle along the land inside the nes and observed that this headland was an island. No one could guess either from the south or the north approach that there was a passage inside the island, until the Tickle opens. The narrowest part of the Tickle is about one mile, and the widest

one mile and a half; its length is about six miles. The island is higher than the land inside and is nearly as high as the Bishops Mitre. Bjarne felt that he had now come far enough north and that he ought to change his course. As he emerged from the Tickle and the sea opened before him, he turned the stern of the ship against the land—set the ship at right angles to the land—and shaped his course for Greenland across the open sea. When Bjarne actually quits the coast the saga says so in its own way. As



MAP OF MUGFORD TICKLE

in the other distances four *doegr* or 480 miles is short measure. Counting a *doegr* at 140 miles would make 560 miles in all, which is not far from the actual distance.

The narrative of Bjarne serves a double purpose. While on the one hand it relates the old tradition of Bjarne's remarkable voyage, it describes on the other the sailing course along the east coast to Greenland. As Bjarne sailed, the mariner is to follow the coast three *doegr* till he comes to a high and mountainous land. On its top one sees masses of snow, and from the snow down to the sea it looks like one solid mass of rock. One is to follow the coast inside the

headland and through the Tickle, and as the ocean opens again on both sides, it is time to take one's bearings for Greenland over the open sea. Then as now Cape Mugford stood as a landmark of the Labrador coast. The Newfoundland and Labrador Pilot calls Cape Mugford "the most remarkable and unmistakable land on the Labrador coast." Eclipse Island is a similar place 60° N., whence the distance to Greenland is less.

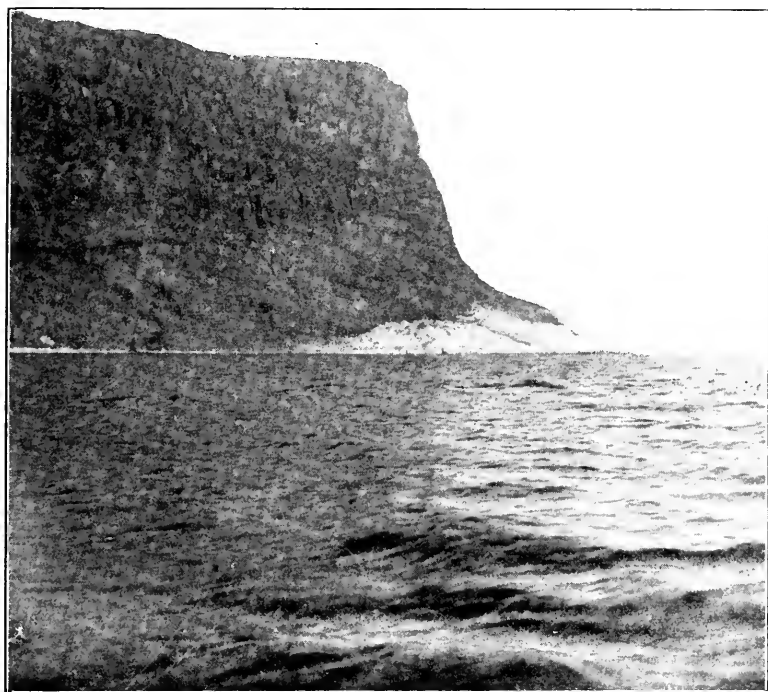


MUGFORD TICKLE, SOUTH END BETWEEN CLIFFS AND SPUR ON THE RIGHT. AUG. 15

On a visit to Earl Eirik of Norway Bjarne later told of his voyage and the lands that he had seen.

Men found it strange that he had not made further investigations. In the summer of 1001 Bjarne returned to Greenland, where talk of discovering new lands was already rife. They rehearsed the adventure of Bjarne and the mention that he had received in Norway. The following winter Leif Eiriksson from Brattalid visited Bjarne, bought his ship and informed himself carefully about his voyage. Leif prepared himself to seek the lands that Bjarne had seen, and gathered a crew of 35 men. Among these was Leif's foster

father, a German, by the name of Tyrker. As this expedition starts from Greenland, the discovered lands now come in the opposite order from what they did in the account of Bjarne. As the course and the distances to the first two lands are already given in Bjarne's voyage northward, the saga finds it superfluous to repeat them in Leif's voyage and goes into a fuller description of the lands. As long as



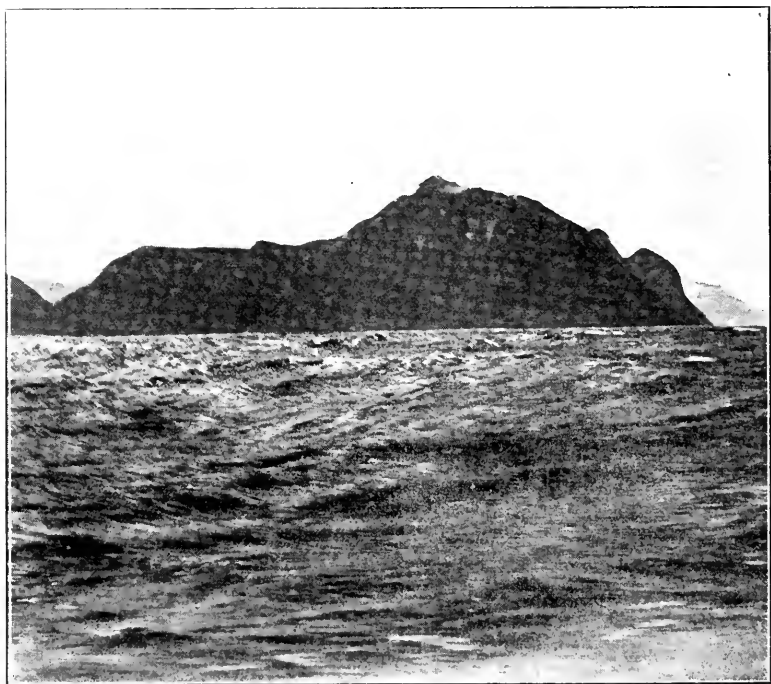
CAPE MUGFORD, 3,000 FEET HIGH. AUGUST 15

Leif follows the same course as Bjarne, neither course nor distance is mentioned; but as soon as he enters upon a new course from the second land, the same method of indicating courses and distances as in the case of Bjarne recurs.

When they were ready they set out to sea and found first the land that Bjarne had seen last. They sailed toward the land, cast anchor, lowered a boat, went ashore and saw no grass there. In the upper tracts were huge jocles—mas-

ses of snow; but from the sea to the jocles it looked to them like one rock, and it seemed to them that this land was of no use.

This agrees with the former description that the land was high and mountainous with jocles or snow on top and appeared to be useless. When we combine both descriptions we obtain a picture that corresponds to our knowledge of



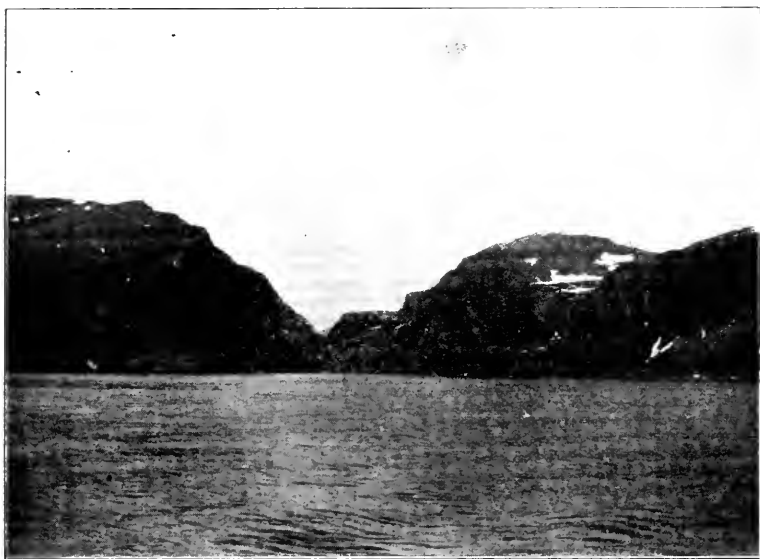
NANUKTOK ISLAND, 2,500 FEET HIGH, FOUR OR FIVE MILES EAST OF CAPE MUGFORD  
SEPTEMBER 10

North Labrador. These tracts lie north of the tree line; nothing grows there, not even grass on these naked and cold crags that reach like a solid rock from the sea to the snow covered mountain tops. High up lie huge masses of snow which they call jocles. It appeared to them that this land was of no use or benefit and so they called it Helluland, or Stoneland, Rockland.

Leif coming from Greenland would enter Mugford

Tickle at the North end and have the view of Cape Mugford on the left and Bishops Mitre on the right, where the scenery is as much like the description in the saga as it is possible to make it. On both sides of the winding Tickle we see the huge rocks reaching like one solid cliff from the sea up to the sparkling snow on the top of the mountain (see illustration).

The objection has been made that the saga speaks of snow-covered mountain tops in Labrador as *jocles* or *glac-*



MUGFORD TICKLE: FROM THE NORTH. ON THE RIGHT BISHOPS MITRE. ON THE LEFT CAPE MUGFORD ISLAND. AUGUST 16

*ciers*, though glaciers do not exist in Labrador. That they saw much snow on the mountains is certain. Missionaries who had lived many years in Labrador assured me that they had seen the mountains covered with snow in all the months of the year. Ten years ago, when they went ashore in July near Nachvak Bay, they found much snow and it looked like winter; on the 29th of August they had three inches of snow on the ship's deck; snow falling in the middle of September remains till far into the next summer. That Bjarne, who sailed late in the fall, and Leif early in the summer, saw

snow-covered mountain tops in Labrador is likely. That the Norsemen from Greenland, who were wont to see snow and ice on their own mountains, should call the snow-covered mountains in Labrador *jocles* is not astonishing. As *jocles* may mean snow-covered mountains or glaciers, the meaning here is not contrary to the usage of the language. Ivar Baardson speaks of *Hvitserk jökul* as a high mountain near Hvarf, and Björn Jonsson of Skardsá speaks of *fuglabiarg i landnordurhafi* as *jökul*.



BISHOPS MITRE FROM THE EAST. AUGUST 16

After this they went on board. Then they sailed out on the sea and found the second land. They sailed toward the land, cast anchor, let down the boat and went ashore. That land was flat and wooded and there were wide stretches of white sand, where they went, and it was not steep down to the sea. From its nature they called this land Markland.

Since we have no sailing directions for the first and second lands on this expedition, we are obliged to use the same that pertain to the corresponding lands in Bjarne's voyage and assume that Leif went ashore in the places where Bjarne saw land. As Bjarne could not see Labrador



from Cape Bauld, he followed the coast westward. From Cape Norman he easily saw the opposite coast and crossed the Strait of Belle Isle.

The saga describes the land under four heads. The first two, *flat* and *wooded*, occur in the account of Bjarne. Contrasted with North Labrador, which is high and mountainous, this land is flat and level. It is not broken up by mountains that rise high above the surrounding country. The first impression that travelers receive of this coast is, that the same level prevails everywhere. They see no rise or fall, but the coastline continues at the same height as far as the eye reaches. The theory is, that in former ages the ice from the interior moved towards the sea and evened the surface to the same level. From the deck of a ship coursing at some distance from the coast the even contour of the land is striking. However, as one approaches the land and sees the countless hills and valleys, one gets almost the opposite impression. But these are comparatively small and diminish towards the interior. From the low hills along the coast the land rises gradually inland towards the watershed hundreds of miles away, where it reaches an elevation of 1500 feet above the sea. Though the description of the saga fits all southern Labrador, it suits the south coast best. Forests are seen here and there along the east coast, as at Davis Inlet, Hamilton Inlet, Porcupine Strand and Sandwich Bay, but along the south coast one frequently sees forests in the harbors and valleys and along the bays, as one goes along the shore. No doubt woods were more frequent and extensive before the destructive forest fires and thousands of fishermen ravaged them. Sand is scarce along the east coast. With the exception of a stretch at Cape Porcupine, sand appears only in small places and at the heads of bays. But on the south coast one sees sand here and there, and at Forteau Bay begins a stretch which goes far into the land and reaches west to Bradore. Here lies Blanc Sablon, named from the white sand-dunes along the river. That the Newfoundland side is sandy hardly concerns us here. The east coast is often steep toward the sea; but from Red Tickle, forty miles north of Battle Harbor, to Blanc Sablon the hills slope gently down to the sea.

As the saga does not specify where Leif went ashore we follow the directions given for Bjarne's voyage and assume that Leif landed where Bjarne saw land, in the strait opposite Cape Norman. Thence he follows the coast southwest and on this voyage sees the white sand-dunes at Blanc Sablon: sandar kvitar vida þar sem þeir foru. From Markland the saga gives separate directions for Leif's voyage, which shows that he no longer follows Bjarne's route, but sails on a route of his own. This is also evident from the directions. Bjarne sailed north along the east coast of Newfoundland to the strait; Leif sailed from the strait southwest into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

After that they hastened back to the ship. Now they sailed away with a northeast wind and were out two *doegr* before they saw land. They sailed toward the land and came to an island which lay to the north of the land, went ashore and looked around in fine weather. They noticed that there was dew in the grass and it seemed to them that they had not tasted any thing so sweet before. Thereupon they went on board and sailed in the sound that lay between the island and the nes that jutted out to the north from the land. They sailed westward past the nes.

As we have shown above, they were in the Strait of Belle Isle. The Labrador shore goes southwest and the Norsemen followed the coast. About 240 miles away lies the large island of Anticosti between this coast and Gaspé. The island is about 30 miles wide and 135 miles long. The west part lies north of Gaspé. Heavy fogs in the summer often cover the Gulf and obscure the vision. But in clear weather one can easily see from Anticosti to Gaspé. When they saw Gaspé opposite them, they went back to the ship and sailed in the strait and followed the coast of Gaspé westward. The sweet dew that the Norsemen found in the grass may have been what is known as "honey-dew;" but I have not been able to ascertain whether it exists on the island of Anticosti.

The saga attempts to give sailing directions to Vinland. From the strait one is to follow the coast of Labrador, or Markland, to the large island of Anticosti. There are many small islands along this coast, but only one of large size

and only one lying north of the land of Gaspé. On reaching this island, they are to take the south channel and follow the Gaspé shore westward. As the island has a slanting position, they may have thought it nearer to Gaspé than it really is. On our earliest maps we find it drawn too near Gaspé.

The enumeration of *doegr*, or distances, in this saga ceases at Anticosti. In the following explorations we find only directions, no *doegr*. The distance from Greenland to Anticosti is nine *doegr* or about 1180 miles, if according to Rymbegla we assume that one *doegr* corresponds to two degrees of latitude, or 120 geographical miles. Since the actual distance from Greenland is approximately 1200 miles and all the distances in the saga prove a little short, we should perhaps rather accept that a *doegr* is about 140 miles. In that case the saga distance from Cape Mugford to Greenland of four *doegr* would be 560 miles, which is approximately correct. This standard for both the Vinland sagas is as constant as we can expect in that period. When we consider that these distances were established nine centuries ago and when we weigh the difficulties that they had to contend with in an unknown land, we can only marvel that they reached these results. Though their standard of measurement is imperfect, yet it is better than no measurement and far surpasses the many guesses that have been made.

It was very shallow there at low tide and the ship stuck fast on the ground and it was far to look from the ship to the sea. But they were so anxious to go ashore that they could not wait till the water rose under the ship, and they ran ashore where a stream flowed out of a lake; but as soon as the sea rose under the ship, they took the boat and rowed out to the ship and took it into the stream and later into the lake. There they cast anchor, carried out their sleeping bags and made themselves huts. Later they decided to stay there and built a large house.

How far west they sailed from Gaspé, the saga does not state, but from the narrative we understand that they reached at least the northern limit where grapes grow<sup>31</sup>. The limit there is 47° N., or a line from the isle of Orleans below

Quebec to the confluence of the Aroostook and St. John rivers. As they roamed about the country on their excursions, they saw no grapes, but when Tyrker one day strayed farther than the rest, he came upon grapes. If we assume, therefore, that Leif's booths stood on the south bank of the St. Lawrence, somewhere between the 46° and the 47°, we can not be far off the mark.

It is characteristic of the lower St. Lawrence that it has ebb and tide and that it is very shallow along the south bank. Even small vessels can not land. At Rimouski, for instance, one sees the sea in the distance at low tide. When I came there, the tide was out and I was told that it was two or two and a half miles out to the sea. A couple of hours later the tide came in and rose to the edge of the town. While the sea was out, men loaded seaweed on rafts, which a horse pulled in at high tide. As it is shallow, the tide rushes in swiftly and goes out with the same speed. The Norsemen were not acquainted with the locality and before they knew what had happened, their ship stood fast on the ground. On the little stream they went some distance into the country and found heavier timber, perhaps, and better shelter against the north wind. At first they put up huts to have cover over their heads; later they built in Norse fashion a *skaale* in the manner of a chieftain's hall.

Salmon was abundant both in the stream and in the lake, and larger than they had seen before. The nature of the country was so favorable that it appeared to them that (small) cattle could do without fodder in the winter. There was no severe cold (frost) in the winter and the grass withered only a little. The day and night were of more equal length than in Greenland or Iceland. The sun had *eyktarstad* and *dagmálastad* on the shortest day in the year.

These remarks are relative and compare the prevailing conditions in Greenland and Iceland with Vinland. The salmon is larger, the land better, the weather milder, day and night are of more equal length than in Greenland or in Iceland. The sun had *eyktarstad* and *dagmálastad*, which it did not have in Greenland or Iceland at the solstice. Statements regarding climatic conditions of a region should be accepted with caution. We often hear people say that it

is not cold or warm in places where the thermometer records the contrary. That there was no frost in Vinland is of course incorrect and can hardly be reconciled with the modest claim that the day and night were of more equal length than in their home countries. *Frost* here as in other places means severe cold. A difference of fourteen and one-half degrees lengthens the day by three hours and two minutes at the winter solstice. In  $46^{\circ} 30' N.$ , the sun rises according to local mean time at 7:41 and sets at 4:15, making a day of eight hours and thirty-four minutes, while in  $61^{\circ} N.$ , the sun rises at 9:12 and sets at 2:44, making a day of five hours and thirty-two minutes. The difference is large enough to warrant the remark in the text. It is now generally agreed that this observation was not taken north of  $49^{\circ} N.$ , and with the route that Leif chose could not have been much south of  $46^{\circ} N.$

To explore the country Leif divided his company into two parties and arranged it so that one-half was to remain at home (by the house) while the other half ranged over the country, but they must not go farther than they could reach home in the evening and not separate from each other. Leif took his turn in going out or staying at home by the skaale. Thus it continued for a season.—One evening they noticed that Tyrker was lost. Leif took this much to heart; for Tyrker had lived with father and son and had been fond of Leif in his childhood. Leif ordered a dozen men to follow him and look for Tyrker. Before they had gone far from the house, Tyrker met them and was kindly received. Soon Leif observed that Tyrker was excited, and asked why he was so late and had separated from his company. At first Tyrker spoke German, rolled his eyes and made faces to them, but they did not understand him. Then he said to them in the Norse tongue: "I did not go much farther than the rest, and yet I have news to tell: I have found *vinvid* and grapes." "Is that true?" said Leif. "To be sure that is true; for I was born where there was no lack of either *vinvid* or grapes."

They slept that night and in the morning Leif said: "Now we shall take up two tasks: every other day we shall gather grapes or cut *vinvid* or fell timber, so as to have a

cargo for the ship." They followed this advice. It is said that the ship's boat was full of grapes. A cargo of timber was cut, and when spring came they made ready and sailed away. Leif named the land from its products and called it Vinland.

The word *vinidr* means grape-vines; but in Greenland, where most people had not tasted wine or grapes and had never seen grape-vines, the word may easily have acquired a different meaning. If they had in mind the color of the wood, they may have applied that name to the cherry or to the red cedar. We have instances of the same word having different meanings in Norway and Iceland. With an abundance of choice timber which could be had for the cutting, it is hard to conceive why they should take on board a cargo of grape-vines for Greenland.

We see from this narrative that Leif was a careful and prudent leader. He took the necessary precautions to protect the men and the house against sudden attacks from the natives. How far they roamed from the house, the saga does not tell. It appears that with the afterboat, which they filled with grapes, they went so far that they found them in abundance. That they made wine from the grapes, we may conclude from the song of Thorhal Veideman, that he expected to drink wine in Vinland.

Thereupon they sailed out upon the sea and had a favorable wind till they saw mountains under the jocles of Greenland. Then they found people on a skerry and saved all and as much goods as the ship could hold. Leif invited the leader Thore and his wife Gudrid and three others to stay with him for the winter at Brattalid and found winter-quarters for the others. After that he was called Leif the Lucky.

Now there was much talk about Leif's voyage to Vinland. His brother Thorvald was of the opinion that they should continue to explore the country. Leif offered him his ship for a Vinland voyage. With the advice of Leif Thorvald made ready and equipped the ship. After this they went to sea, in all thirty men, and came to Leif's booths.

The saga has nothing to report concerning this expedition before it reached Vinland. Since the saga has already

in the accounts of Bjarne and Leif described the lands that they passed on the way, there is no occasion for repeating them here. Thorvald's part in the voyages begins in Vinland. They laid up the ship there and remained quiet during the winter.

In the spring Thorvald gave orders to get ready the ship and that the afterboat with a few men should go westward and explore the country during the summer. They set out. They thought the land was fair and well wooded, and it was not far between the forests and the sea and there were long stretches of white sand. There were many islands and it was very shallow. They saw no traces of men or of deer, except that on one of the western islands they found a grainshed of timber. Without finding any other signs of people they returned to Leif's booths in the fall.

The saga here enumerates six points which tally exactly with the conditions on the south banks of the St. Lawrence river. It is a well known fact that a sail on the St. Lawrence is remarkably beautiful. Immigrants from Norway who take this route to the west praise the landscape in the manner of the saga. The big forests reach down to the beach—not as in Markland, where they had to go long distances into bays and fjords to obtain timber. In several places we find sandy beaches washed by the waves at high tide. Some of them are wide and shallow. The natives told me that the incoming tide in places rushes in with such a fury that a horse can barely escape. Islands begin to appear at Rimouski and become more numerous as one approaches Quebec. The Norsemen evidently looked upon the lower St. Lawrence as a part of the sea, as the water was salt and had ebb and tide. The French natives regularly speak of it now as the sea (*la mer*). As the river trends towards the southwest, the Norsemen may have thought that there was an ocean on the west and south. Some who believed that Vinland was an extension of Africa, must have entertained this notion, as we read in an Icelandic geography: Some believe that (Vinland) is connected with Africa, and if that be the case, then the ocean must needs come in between Vinland and Markland. Maps from the 16th century actu-

ally show a connection between the St. Lawrence and the ocean near New York.

In the summer (the afterboat having gone west in the spring) Thorvald cruised with the merchant ship east of the land and then took a more northerly course along the land. Then a violent storm came upon them near a nes and they drove upon it and broke the keel under the ship. They remained there a long time and repaired the ship. Now they raised the keel on the nes and called it Kjalarnes. Thereupon they sailed away from there eastward past the land (and came on the east coast).

The saga is very brief and does not repeat itself. The only apparent exception is when Leif goes over the same ground as Bjarne. But we should remember that Bjarne only saw the lands from the deck of his ship, while Leif went ashore and explored the country. Two expeditions were out the first summer that Thorvald spent in Vinland. All historians have erroneously accepted that the expedition led by Thorvald spent three winters in Vinland. They assign one summer to the expedition westward in the afterboat, and another to the expedition eastward in the merchant vessel. But the saga says that the afterboat left in the first spring and the merchant vessel in the first summer after they sailed from Greenland, and in the fall both expeditions came back to Leif's booths. The expedition under Thorvald spent only two winters in Vinland. The men in the afterboat now explored the coast to the west of Leif's booths. Leif had discovered the stretch of coast as far east as Gaspé three years before. Now when Thorvald sails along this coast on his voyage eastward, it is the fourth time that Norsemen pass it and the saga does not mention it, being old and familiar ground. The narrative of the saga begins east of Gaspé and New Brunswick, where Thorvald cruised in virgin waters. The details are exasperatingly few. East of Gaspé and New Brunswick they cruised as far as Newfoundland, where they turned north (hit nyrðra fyrir landit) and followed the west coast to the uttermost nes, Cape Norman. To be sure, Cape Bauld lies farther north, but Cape Bauld is an island with a passage for ships between the island and the land. As one stands on Cape Norman and



sees the harborless shore towards the southwest and Cape Bauld to the east, it becomes apparent that Cape Norman is the land's end to the north. The nes is now 61 feet high and rises abruptly from the sea. On the east side below the cape is a small harbor by the name of Norman or Cape Cove, from which the top of the cape is easily accessible. When Thorvald and his men had repaired the ship in Cape Cove, they carried the old keel upon the top of the nes and stood it up about where the light-house now stands and called the nes Kjalarnes. Thus the cape received the name which it bore as long as Norsemen sailed these waters. It stood in a place that all ships from Greenland passed and was situated on the great highway of travel in the New World. If Karlsefne a few years later renamed the cape, like Helluland and Markland, it only received again the same name that it had before. From Cape Norman they sailed eastward past the land (*austr fyrir landit*) and came on the east coast. That Kjalarnes can not have been Cape Bauld is apparent from the fact that they sailed eastward along the land from Kjalarnes, while Cape Bauld is the easternmost point with no land beyond.

The following occurrences took place on the east coast, possibly at St. Anthony or in Hare Bay. They sailed into the neighboring fjords and all went ashore on a projecting point that was wooded. The place seemed fair to Thorvald and he desired to dwell there. A little inside the nes they found three skin-boats and three natives sleeping under each boat. They killed eight, but one escaped with a boat. Soon a countless number of skin-boats issued from the fjord and attacked them. They put up the storm shields along the gunwale and defended themselves. The natives shot with arrows for a while, then took to flight as fast as they could. An arrow flew between the edge of the ship and the shield and struck Thorvald under the arm. "This is my death," said Thorvald. "Now it is my advice that you go back to the crew, but carry me to the nes, where I thought it fair to dwell. There you shall bury me and set a cross at my head and feet and always call it Krossanes." Thorvald died there, and the men did as he had said. Thereupon they sailed away, found their comrades and told each other tidings. Thus the crew that had gone west in the afterboat

in the spring and the crew that had sailed east in the merchant ship in the summer returned in the fall. They stayed in Leif's booths in the winter and found grapes, *vinvid* and a cargo for the ship. The following spring they sailed back to Greenland, arrived in Eiriksfiord after two years' absence and had great tidings to tell Leif.

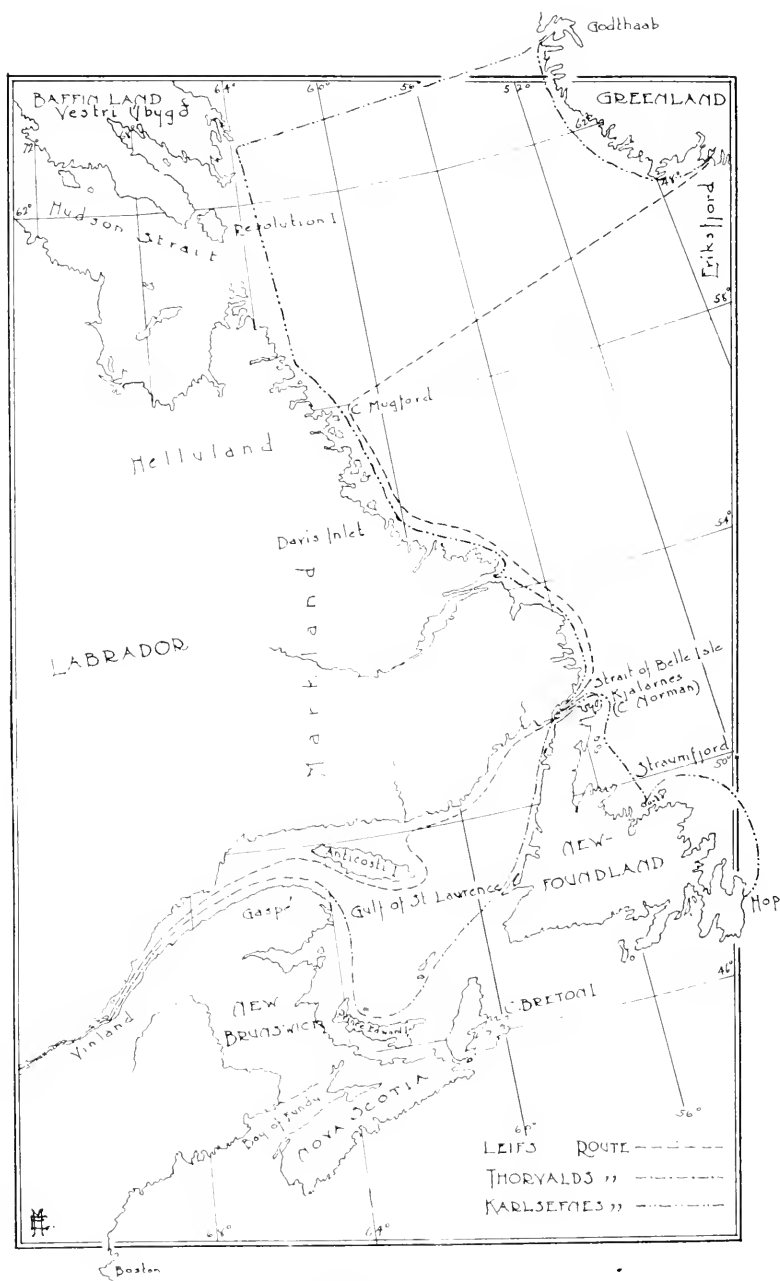
The three voyages that we have now reviewed describe important discoveries made by the Norsemen in the New World. Bjarne's voyage gives us for the first time a glimpse of the east coast from southern Newfoundland to Greenland. Leif's and Thorvald's voyages open to us the basin of the St. Lawrence. Since in all likelihood all visible traces of the Norsemen's visits to these shores have long since passed away, the record of the sagas must decide whether they have explored these regions.

With the location of Vinland in the St. Lawrence valley the voyage becomes simple and natural. The waters traversed on this route are safe and offer no serious difficulty to the skillful mariner. The Labrador coast in summer is unusually calm and in case of storm is abundantly supplied with excellent harbors. The inland waters of the gulf are even more secure. Following this route the Norsemen were never out of sight of land after they had once found the Labrador coast. To be sure they shifted to the Gaspé shore at Anticosti, but only when they saw the land opposite them. The voyage along the east coast, on the other hand, is far more hazardous and offers the wellnigh insurmountable difficulty of passing from Newfoundland to Nova Scotia. By the southward trend of the St. Lawrence river they easily reached a latitude that is mild and well provided with grapes and rich in many kinds of timber.

From this region we have the only reminders of the Norsemen in America south of Labrador. The earliest missionaries claim that they found traces of Christianity in the St. Lawrence valley. Christian Le Clerq, who lived twelve years in Gaspé, mentions that he found remnants of the Lord's Prayer and a reverence for the cross among the natives there. Joseph François Lafitan makes similar statements and speaks of finding traces of Christianity among

the Indians and observed that the cross was the symbol of their faith.

Scholars have in recent years called attention to the remarkable likeness that exists between the Canadian game of lacrosse and the Old-Norse game of ball, called *Knattleikr*. It is believed that the Indians acquired the game from the Norsemen and that they have transmitted it somewhat changed down to our day<sup>33</sup>. The Algonquins, who originally dwelt where I locate the Norse Vinland, seem to have learnt the game from the Norsemen and to have introduced it among the Iroquois, Hurons and other tribes. It seems to be more than a striking coincidence that all these traces should be found in this region.



NORTHEAST COAST.

## THORFIN KARLSEFNE'S SAGA

**T**HORFIN KARLSEFNE was the son of Thord Hesthofdi and Thorun and lived on Reynines by Skagafjord. He belonged to a powerful and wealthy family and sailed about as a merchant and was considered a good captain. One summer he made ready to sail to Greenland together with Snorre Thorbrandson, the famous gode of Helgafell. There were forty men on board the ship. Bjarne Grimolfsson and Thorhal Gamlason also made their ship ready and accompanied Karlsefne and Snorre. These had also forty men on board. Both ships reached Eiriksford in Greenland in the fall. Eirik the Red and several Greenlanders rode down to the ships and traded with them. The merchants asked Eirik to take as much of their wares as he desired, and in return Eirik invited the crews of both ships to stay with him for the winter. They accepted the invitation and brought their goods under shelter; for there were many out-houses at Brattalid. The merchants were well satisfied with Eirik in the winter. Towards Christmas Eirik waxed silent and less cheerful than was his wont, when he understood that there would be lack of corn for so many and he feared that they might say that they had never had a worse Christmas than the one Eirik the Red gave them in Greenland. When Karlsefne heard this, he opened his stores and bade Eirik take as much as he wanted. Then Eirik prepared for Christmas and the festivities were so grand that people thought that they had not seen the like of this in Greenland. When Karlsefne married Gudrid after Christmas, the festivities were renewed and there was great joy at Brattalid in the winter.

They talked much about seeking Vinland and many

expected to find their fortunes there. It resulted in this, that Karlsefne and Snorre made ready their ship to go to Vinland in the spring. Bjarne and Thorhal did likewise and accompanied them with the ship and crew they had from Iceland. A Greenland ship also accompanied them, and most of those on board this ship were Greenlanders. Of Eirik the Red's people are mentioned his son Thorvald and his son-in-law Thorvard with his wife Freydis, and one Thorhal, called Veideman, or hunter, who had long been with Eirik as a hunter or fisherman in summer and a steward in winter. The saga is severe and almost merciless in its judgment of Thorhal, saying, among other things, that he was large, black and mean and had taken little interest in Christianity since it came to Greenland. He went in the ship with Thorvald, for he had a wide acquaintance with the obygdur. Although Thorhal was not friendly, Eirik associated much with him. On the three ships there are said to have been upwards of 160 men. That one-half of the crew went on board in Greenland, shows that people there must have taken great interest in the expedition, if we can accept these figures, which appear to be somewhat exaggerated. Weary of lying quiet and eager to start they set out early. All former expeditions had gone out from Eiriksfjord and crossed the open sea to Labrador. Like Bjarne they may have had rough weather. The last expedition under Thorstein had encountered storms and heavy seas and had been driven about all summer. Instead of reaching Vinland they got a glimpse of Iceland and saw birds from Ireland. Late in the fall they came to land in the West Bygd. Naturally they hesitated to venture out upon this sea and cast about in the winter for another route. Eirik the Red had already discovered Baffin Land, and sealing vessels on daring excursions had since no doubt penetrated farther south. From Eiriksfjord they sailed to the West Bygd, whence (*in two docgr*) they crossed Davis Strait to Baffin Land. From Bjarney, an island upon the coast, they sailed in two *docgr* south to Helluland. The saga co-ordinates as important stations on the way to Vinland the West Bygd, Bjarney, Helluland, Markland and Kjalarnes. As might be expected, some links in this chain would

come out of place. So AM. 557 combines West Bygd and Bjarney, as if the latter were an island on the west coast of Greenland, whence Karlsefne sailed south to Labrador in two *doegr*, changing the direction as well as the distance. By a false use of the Grønlandiæ Vetus Chorographia some have placed Bjarney far up the west coast of Greenland and uselessly increased the distance and changed the direction of the saga. At first this was only a careless expres-



SOUTH SIDE OF NACHVAK BAY, FROM SCHOONER. AUGUST 22

sion, which has since entailed much annoyance. Bjarney lying to the north of Helluland must be sought in Baffin Land. Odd Jonsson cites to the point an important variant in this place: Sigldu þeir síðan ut frá landi i Vestari Ubygðir. Vestari Ubygdir here is the Vestre Obygd of the Landnáma and can only be Baffin Land. It is absurd with some to place Bjarney in Disco Island or on the west coast of Greenland and to make the expedition sail forward and back over the same route, to make the voyage upon the sea twice as long as it needed to be—to double that passage over the open sea which they purposely endeavored

to shorten. These were the *ubygdir* past which Thorhal Veideman should pilot the ships.

From Bjarney on the coast of Baffin Land they sailed two *doegr*, or four degrees, south. Then they saw land, put off a boat and explored the land. They found large flagstones, often twelve ells wide, and many foxes. They gave the land a name and called it Helluland. The sailing directions are correct, but the description of the land is



POMIADLUK

Mountain and glaciated bench (hellur). July 30

deficient. We learn only that they found large flagstones and many foxes. This saga calls the land Helluland, because they found there many flagstones (*hellur*), but the *Flateyrbok* called it Helluland because it consisted of cliffs and rocks and was a stone-land without vegetation. It appears to me that the *Flateyrbok* has the original version. As far as I was able to learn, no place answering the description of the *Karlsefne* saga was known along the Labrador coast. No doubt they saw the coast all the way



from Cape Chidley, though in saga fashion they are made to come upon the land just where they go ashore. The object of the saga is manifestly to describe the land that Bjarne and Leif had seen. The nearest resemblance that I can find along the Labrador coast to *hellur* in Karlsefne's saga are the so-called glaciated benches, where the glaciers have flattened and polished the rocks. The illustration, however, is from Pomiadluk, in latitude 55°.



DAVIS INLET. LAT. 56°  
(A bit of Markland)

Thence they sailed two *docgr* and veered from south to southeast and found a land—Davis Inlet to Hamilton Inlet—which was well wooded and had many deer. Southeast of the land lay an island, where they killed a bear, and which on that account they called Bjarney, and the land they named Markland.

From Nain the Labrador coast bends towards the southeast as far as Hamilton Inlet. That an island may lie to the southeast, the coast must go west, as it does at Hamilton Inlet. On one of the islands in the inlet they killed a bear and afterwards called the island Bjarney. The Icelandic

Annals relate that in 1347 a Greenland ship that had been in Markland came drifting without anchor to Straumfjord in Iceland. This incident shows that in the middle of the fourteenth century the Greenlanders had not forgotten the way to Markland and were perhaps still making their annual visits there to obtain timber. The use of the word *siðan*, afterwards, suggests the same interpretation. Hamilton Inlet abounds in timber and is not overly far from Greenland. We have every reason to believe that the Norse Greenlanders supplied themselves there with timber.

As Leif had already explored and named Helluland and Markland, it seems strange that the saga should ascribe this honor to Karlsefne. It came about in the following manner. The Flateyrbok describes the route of the first expedition, and after it is once given, it obtains for all the succeeding expeditions. The Flateyrbok does not give separate descriptions for Thorvald or Freydis, as they come later and pass over the same route as Leif. But the expedition of Karlsefne, being the only one in the Karlsefne saga, is treated as the first in the series. To make the narrative intelligible the saga had to describe the course and give the directions and the distances. Those who did not know the complete narrative of all the expeditions to Vinland, supposed that the chapter on Karlsefne's voyage contained the entire account of the history of Vinland. Since the brief and summary account of Leif's accidental discovery of Vinland does not mention Helluland and Markland, it would naturally occur to them that Karlsefne was the real discoverer of these lands and gave them names. This explains also the scant consideration which they receive in this saga. Originally there was no description of these lands here, as they belonged to Leif's saga; but when their discovery fell to Karlsefne and they had to insert a description, they were at a loss as to what to say and merely translated the names. Helluland was the land of hellur and foxes, and Markland was the land of forests and deer.

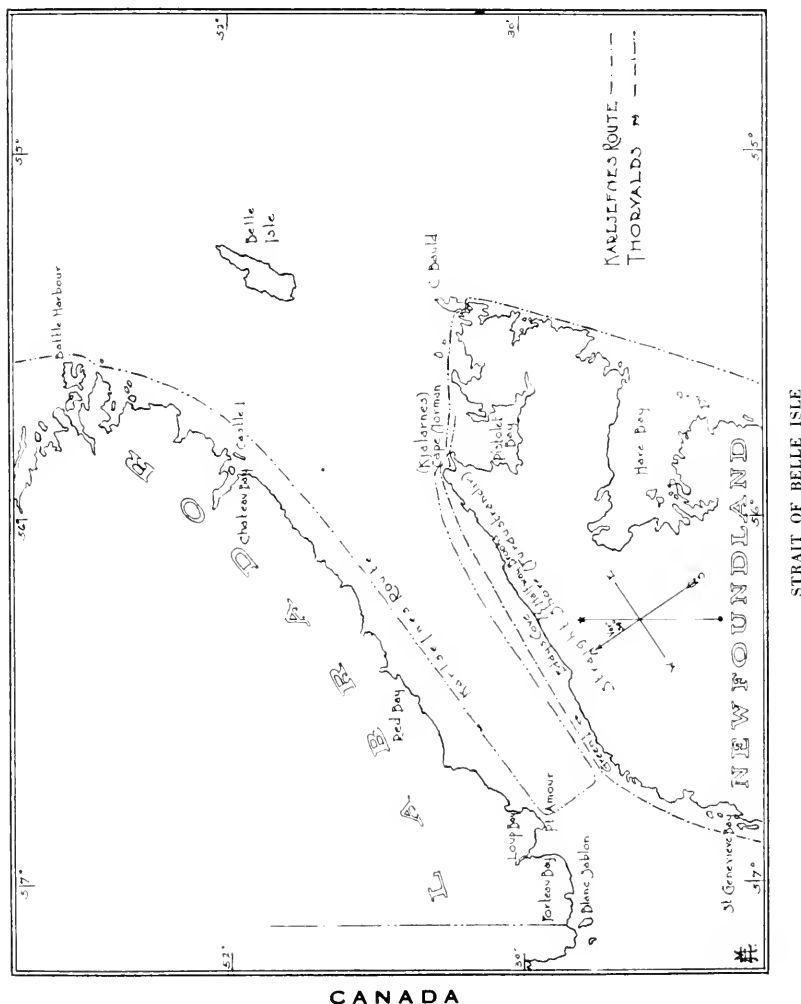
In the following section one codex is fuller than the other. AM. 544: From Markland they sailed south along the coast a long while and came opposite a nes, and the land lay on starboard; there were long, sandy strands. They

rowed to land and found on the nes the keel of a ship, and called it Kjalarnes, and the strands they called Furdustrandir; for they thought it long to sail past them. AM. 557: When two *doegr* were past, they saw land and sailed to it. There was a nes over against which they came. They tacked along the coast and kept the land on starboard. There was a harborless coast and long, sandy strands. They went ashore in boats and found on the nes the keel of a ship and called it Kjalarnes. They named also the strands and called them Furdustrandir; for they were long to sail past.

From Hamilton Inlet the coast goes south 200 miles to Battle Harbor, where the Strait of Belle Isle commences. Thence it is 26 miles to Cape Bauld, with Cape Norman 18 miles farther west. Cape Norman is thus scant two *doegr*, or 240 miles, distant from Hamilton Inlet, as one saga has it. The coast which they followed was that of Markland, which reaches to the Strait. The Flateyrbok says that Leif sailed southwest from Markland, which becomes possible only in the Strait. All Icelandic geographies are agreed that it is not far from Markland to Vinland, meaning thereby the Strait of Belle Isle and Karlsefne's Vinland. When Gripla states that it is not far from Helluland to Vinland, the meaning is that all Labrador is at times called Helluland, altho Helluland as a rule was applied to the high, mountainous and treeless North Labrador, whereas the wooded southern part was called Markland (Markland þar er skogrinn er). No sea is ever mentioned between Markland and Helluland.

That Kjalarnes lies on the south side of the Strait can be shown from both sagas. It is not mentioned by Leif or those who follow the Labrador coast to Vinland. Thorvald, who came from Leif's Vinland by way of Prince Edward Island and followed the coast of Newfoundland, broke his keel upon it and after repairing his vessel continued to follow the coast until he came to the east coast. Thorhal Veideman, who came from Straumfjord on the east coast of Newfoundland and followed its coast till he reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence, passed Kjalarnes. Likewise Karlsefne, who sailed north on the east coast and south on the west coast, rounded Kjalarnes in the strait, but he

does not pass it on his return to Greenland, when he probably sailed between Cape Bauld and Belle Isle as the steamers now do. It lay too far west to be seen by boats going north or south along the east coast.



It is generally assumed that Furdustrandir and Kjalar-nes lie along an east coast that goes north and south, and no one has explained how they seem to see the nes twice<sup>34</sup>. It seems that Haukr Erlendsson has cut down the Hauks-

bok to suit that view. As they came from the north and coursed along Labrador, they are over against the nes and no doubt see the nes on the opposite shore. Still they keep on tacking along the Labrador shore with the land on starboard, and they cross between Point Amour and Sandy Cove, where it is narrowest, and follow on the Newfoundland side back again by the long and sandy and harborless Straight Shore, which appeared to them so long, till they at length reached Kjalarnes, or Cape Norman, over against where they first saw it.

They landed on the east side of the nes—the only landing place there—mounted the hill and found the keel that Thorvald and his men had raised there. The oral tradition here no doubt recalled the expedition of Thorvald and the accident that had befallen him, but the literary saga contents itself with this brief reference. The saga goes into many details in the Strait, because it was possible there to sail in several directions.

Then the land (coast) is cut by bays and they sailed into one of them. Now the coastline changes: Instead of a straight and harborless coast on the west side of the nes, there is on the east side a succession of bays and harbors all the way to the east coast. It is literally correct, as the saga has it, that the appearance of the coast changes as soon as one passes the nes.

In one of these bays Karlsefne put ashore two Scotch runners and told them to run southward and explore the land. Within three days they returned, one with an ear of wheat and the other with a bunch of grapes. Shore wheat Karlsefne might have picked on the shore himself, as I have done; but grapes do not grow in Newfoundland. Still I saw in the woods not far from this place a red berry that grows in bunches and otherwise resembles grapes and might be mistaken for grapes by people who did not know grapes and were anxious to find them. People with whom I talked on this coast said that they had never seen grapes, and only imagined how they looked from pictures that they had seen. When we consider that most of the Norsemen had not even seen pictures of grapes, we can easily understand how they could be mistaken. It does not mend matters to transfer

this incident to Cape Breton Island, as Storm has done; for neither there do grapes grow. To find a place on the east coast farther south, where grapes grow and which otherwise suits the two sagas, is not possible.

Thereupon they took the runners on board the ship and sailed away southward, till the coast was cut by fjords. They took the ships into a fjord, went ashore, carried out the cargo and settled down. Outside of the fjord was an island, and strong currents ran around it. They called the island *Straumsey* and the fjord *Straumfjord*.

What was the distance from *Kjalarnes* to *Straumfjord*, we do not know, as AM. 544 ceases to give *doegr* in *Markland* and AM. 557 at *Kjalarnes*. The appearance of this land we gather from a few statements which are fairly definite. From the bays east of *Kjalarnes* they sailed south and came to *Straumfjord*. While they stayed at *Straumfjord*, they were of the opinion that the land became wider as they went southward. This shows that they had not yet passed *Cape Race*; for south of *Newfoundland* the coast recedes constantly and the land narrows as one goes south. This observation is also in accord with what we read in several geographies, that *Vinland* was perhaps connected with *Africa*. If the Norsemen had reached beyond *Newfoundland*, they would have observed that the reverse was the fact and would have called attention to it both in the saga and in the geographies. From *Straumfjord* *Karlsefne* sailed south to *Hop* and north back to *Straumfjord*. From *Straumfjord* *Karlsefne* sailed north, and after passing *Kjalarnes* he sailed south along the west coast, till he thought he was opposite *Hop* and that they saw the same mountains that they had seen at *Hop*. From *Straumfjord* it was about the same distance in a straight line to *Hop* and to this place. From *Straumfjord* *Thorhal*, called *Veideman*, sailed north, and when he had passed *Kjalarnes* and *Furdustrandir* and was about to sail along the west coast (*fyrir vestan*) a fierce gale drove him east to *Ireland*, which lies on this parallel. According to the saga, then, the west coast runs north and south; the east coast has an eastward trend; in the north it ends in a point, which they called *Kjalarnes*, with a barren, harborless coast on the west and bays on the

east. This description agrees with that of Newfoundland, which lies in the form of a triangle, ending in Cape Norman in the north. The south coast is never mentioned in either saga. The north end of Cape Breton Island also runs into a point and might in so far be taken for Cape Norman, but if we, as Storm does, place Straumfjord at Gut of Canso and Hop farther west in Nova Scotia, they will be situated on a south coast, while the saga indicates an east coast. There is no likelihood for the view that at Cape Race they left the coast which they had hitherto followed so closely and traversed four hundred miles of open sea to Cape Breton Island. Though the passage from Port Aux Basques or Cape Ray is much less, they could not see across and had no means of knowing that here was the shortest passage over Cabot Strait. Furthermore Cape Breton has no sandy strands and bays as those which the saga describes at the north end. Between the two points in which Cape Breton Island terminates the coast runs in a slight inward curve of a few miles.

The saga remarks that the coast was cut by bays at Kjalarnes, while it was cut by a fjord at Straumfjord. This difference we observe when we compare the small bays east of Cape Norman and the long fjords that begin with White Bay and Notre Dame Bay.

The description of Straumfjord is not more exact than that it may tally with several places in these fjords, which are surrounded by mountains on one side and by outlying islands on the other. Outside the long fjord called Halls Bay, for example, lies Little Bay Island with strong currents on both sides, where the tide is said to rise ten feet. The land trends strongly to the east and corresponds to the observation made at Straumfjord. If we assume that Straumfjord was in Notre Dame Bay and Hop was in one of the southern bays it will satisfy all the requirements of the saga and give us a fair solution of the difficulty.

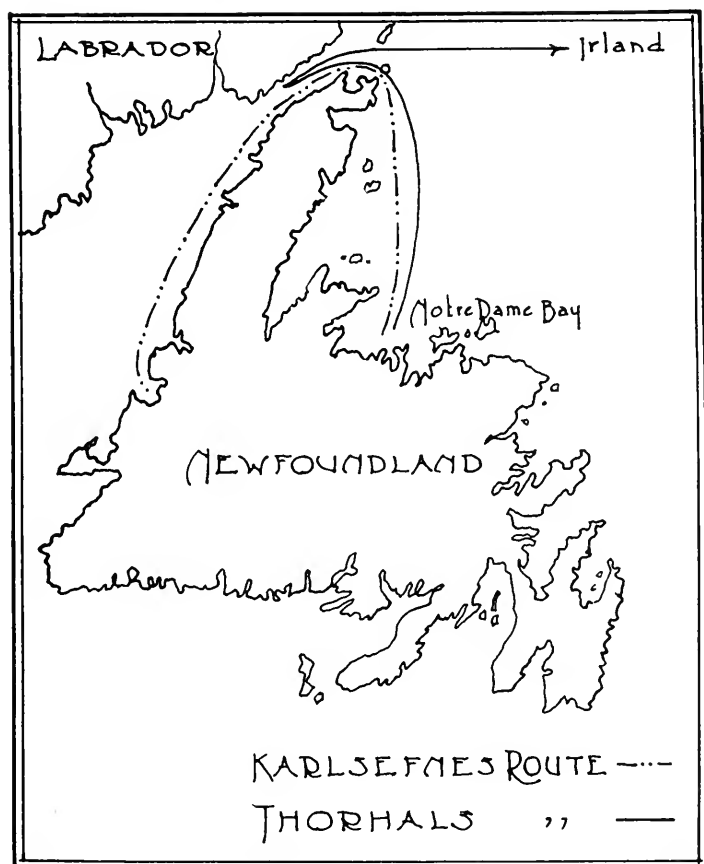
They had with them all kinds of cattle and they tried to derive some advantage from the land. There were mountains and fine views. They did nothing else than explore the land. The grass was high. They remained there that winter and it proved to be severe. Since they had not made

any provisions for the winter, there was lack of food. Fishing ceased and they were unable to find game. So they moved out upon the island in the hope of obtaining fish, or a whale might come drifting. Yet food was scarce, but the cattle thrived. Then they made vows to God that he should send them something; but it did not come as soon as they expected. Thorhal, who favored the old religion, disappeared, and some of the men searched for him for three days. On the fourth day Karlsefne and Snorre found him on the top of a knoll engaged in some mummerly to Thor. He lay on his back and stared and gaped into the air and muttered something, while he pinched and scratched himself. They asked him to go home with them and he did so. Soon after a whale floated in and the cooks cut it up and boiled parts of it; but all became sick. Thorhal said that he had escaped, thanks to the red-bearded Thor for whom he chanted; seldom had he failed him. When the men heard this they refused to taste the whale and rolled it over the cliff into the sea. In the spring they went into the fjord again. The weather grew milder and they found abundant food; they found game on land, eggs on the island and fish in the sea. Hauksbok does not mention that they moved out to the island in the winter.

While they were living at Straumfjord, things took a new turn. In the beginning and as long as weather was mild and they found abundant food, all went well; but when the severe winter came and they suffered for lack of food and had to endure all kinds of hardships, the conviction became general that Straumfjord was not in Vinland. Thorhal Veideman advocated that they should seek Vinland towards the west; he pleaded that they should sail back past Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir and look for Vinland in the west. He felt sure that he was right and put forth his views with all the fire and energy he possessed. He succeeded in convincing the men that it was worth while trying, and he obtained the command of one ship with a crew of nine men. As he made his ship ready and was carrying water to the ship, he drank from the bucket and sang his disappointment in having to carry himself the bucket to the fountain instead of drinking the best wine, as they had



promised him. As they hoisted the sail, Thorhal sang again about going back to a better place, where friends are found, while those who praise the land (Straumfjord) may stay behind and cook whale meat on the forsaken strands. Thorhal was sure that Karlsefne had lost his way



and that in order to come upon the right course they had to go back past Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir and thus come upon the course that Leif had followed to Vinland. The commentators understand the words *Förum aptr* as though Thorhal meant to return to Greenland, which is manifestly false and could not have been entertained. Karlsefne ac-

companies him to the island, where they parted. Thorhal sailed northward, passed Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir, and as he was about to tack westward (into the Gulf of St. Lawrence) or on the west coast (of Newfoundland), a storm from the west drove him eastward to Ireland, which lies on the same parallel. There they were treated badly and Thorhal lost his life, as merchants have related.

This attempt of Thorhal to reach Vinland shows where an old and experienced sailor, who had informed himself about Leif's course, thought that Vinland was located. As an intimate and trusted friend of Eirik the Red Thorhal had the best opportunity to know the route to Vinland, and as a much traveled man he would take a great interest in the new discoveries. Although this expedition failed on account of a storm, it went far enough to show whither they intended to sail and where they would have come under more favorable circumstances. Thorhal's purpose was to find the route by which Leif had discovered Vinland—just what we should expect from one so intimately acquainted with the family of Eirik the Red. The two songs that we have in this chapter show that we are dealing with an old section of the narrative. It is possible that the saga-teller misinterpreted the old songs and did not apprehend the true relation between the old song and the story; but at this distance we can hardly go back of the saga-teller and we are obliged to assume that he understood his sources, till we can prove the contrary. As far as this goes, it points to the knowledge of a Vinland farther west than Straumfjord and Hop, and in so far this fragmentary information is in accord with the accounts in the *Flateyrbok*.

As a reason for the harsh and merciless treatment which Thorhal receives in this saga, we are told that he remained a heathen, when most of the people accepted Christianity. This is hardly tenable, since we have in this very saga several instances of heathens who receive considerate mention. I need only mention Eirik the Red, Thorstein Bonde and the witch Thorbjörg, or Lítill-Völva. The reason seems rather to be, that he opposed Karlsefne's favorite purpose of finding Vinland to the south and insisted on going to Leif's Vinland in the west. According to the

Icelanders' views it was incumbent on them to show that Newfoundland, to which Karlsefne came, was the real Vinland and for that reason they handled Thorhal roughly.

Karlsefne, Snorre and Bjarne with their people sailed south along the coast. They sailed a long time till they came to a stream which flowed from the interior into a lake and then into the sea. At the mouth were large sand-bars so that they could enter only at high tide. They sailed into the mouth of the stream and called the land Hop. On the lowlands they found self-sown wheat fields and higher up *vinvid*, they found fish and deer (caribou) in abundance and their cattle thrived there. They built houses up from the water, some nearer and others farther away.

The location of Hop is quite as indefinite as that of Straumfjord. We have shown elsewhere that the Norsemen hardly sailed south past Newfoundland. The mild winter and the abundance of fish and game which they found points to southern Newfoundland, which is fully as mild in winter as New England. The saga relates that fish and game left the northerly Straumfjord in the fall, but appeared again in Hop. The caribou abandons northern Newfoundland in the winter, as that part of the island is covered with deep snow at that season of the year, while the southern part is open with a moderate climate. Fish and game move south in the fall. Writers have laid great stress on the expression that they sailed a long time (*lengi*), as if the east coast of Newfoundland were too short. The saga uses the same expression about Karlsefne's sail south along the west coast of Newfoundland, which is of the same length as the east coast. A similar expression (*langa stund*) the saga uses about the distance from Hamilton Inlet to Cape Norman, which distance is less than 240 miles.

They stayed there a half month before they became aware of Skrælings. Early one morning they saw a great number of skin-boats approach. From the boats the natives swung poles which produced a noise like that of flails, and they swung them with the sun. As a sign of peace the Norsemen took a white shield and held it out towards them. The natives rowed nearer, stood amazed and finally came ashore. They were a black and ugly people and had coarse

hair on their heads. They had large eyes and were broad across the cheek bones. They remained a while and gazed around in wonder and afterwards rowed away south past the nes. The Norsemen dwelt there that winter. No snow fell and the cattle fed themselves outside.

When spring came they saw a great multitude of skin-boats come rowing from the south past the nes, so many that the sea appeared to be sown with coals. The Norsemen put up their shields and held a fair. The natives wanted to buy especially red cloth. They gave one untanned skin for a piece of cloth one span long, which they bound on their heads. They wanted to buy also spears and swords; but Karlsefne and Snorre forbade that. When they began to run short of cloth, they cut it up into strips as wide as across the finger; but the Skrælings paid as much, if not more, for these. Thus the barter went on for a while, when a bull came rushing out of the woods and bellowed loudly. The Skrælings took fright, ran out upon their boats and rowed away south past the nes. They were not seen for three weeks. Then they saw a multitude of skin-boats come from the south with the tide. They swung poles against the sun and shouted loudly. The Norsemen carried red shields against them and they began to fight. At first they shot. The Skrælings had war-slings. Karlsefne and Snorre saw the Skrælings raise on poles a ball as large as a sheep's paunch and blue in color and sling it on land over Karlsefne's people. It came down with a loud report and frightened the Norsemen, who retired along the stream, till they came to some rocky hillocks, for they thought that the Skrælings set upon them from all sides. There they fought resolutely. Freydis came out and saw how they retreated. She was a bold woman and thought that they might be able to butcher them like cattle. Had she but weapons, she would fight better than any of them, she said, as she followed them into the forest. Finding Thorbrand Snorrason killed with a stone in the head, she took his sword to defend herself. When the Skrælings caught up with her, she drew her breast from her shirt and whetted the sword upon it. At this uncanny act the Skrælings took fright, ran out upon their boats and rowed away. Praising

Freydis for her courage they went to their booths and dressed their wounds.

Although many Skrælings and only two Norsemen had fallen, yet the advantage in numbers rested with the natives. However fertile the land was, they now understood that they would constantly be exposed to danger and fear from the natives. They made ready to sail back to their own country.

They sailed northward along the land and found five Skrælings sleeping in their bags. They had vessels filled with marrow and blood. Supposing them to be outlaws, the Norsemen killed them. Thereupon they came to a nes where were a great many deer (caribou), and the nes looked like a dung heap, because the deer lay there at night. People in Newfoundland, who know the conditions, told me that the caribou is in the habit of resorting to points of land that project into the sea to escape the swarms of flies and mosquitoes that torment them. Now they returned to Straumfjord and found everything that they needed.

Karlsefne set out with one ship to look for the lost Thorhal Veideman, while the rest stayed behind. They sailed northward past Kjalarnes and then (southward) along the west coast. They had the land on the port side and there were only solitudes. When they had sailed a long time they came to a stream that flowed from east to west into the sea. They laid the ship along the south bank in the mouth of the stream. One morning Karlsefne and his men saw something that glittered in the forest above a clearance. They called to it and it moved; it was a Uniped. It hopped down to the bank of the river, where they lay, and shot an arrow into the entrails of Thorvald Eiríksson, who sat at the helm. A little later Thorvald died of this wound. The Uniped ran away northward and they hurried after him and thought that they saw him now and then, but he seemed to get away and at last he ran out upon a bay. Then they turned back.

Then they sailed away northward and on the way they thought they saw the land of the Unipeds; but they did not want to risk the lives of their people. It appeared to them that the mountains that they saw here and those they had

seen at Hop were the same and that from Straumfjord here and from Straumfjord to Hop was the same distance. They returned and stayed at Straumfjord the third winter. There was disagreement and the people divided into parties. Karlsefne's son Snorre, who was born the first fall that they were at Straumfjord, was now three winters old, when they went away.

When they sailed from Vinland they had a south wind



HUMBER RIVER, WEST COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND

and came to Markland. They found there five Skrælings (Eskimos), a bearded man, two women and two boys. The boys they captured, but the others sank into the ground. A little superstition appears at times in this saga. When the natives swarmed on all sides of them in the battle, they imagined that their eyes had been bewitched; as the Eskimos escaped into their igloos, they seemed to sink into the ground. They took the boys along with them, taught them the Norse language and had them baptized. These said their mother's name was Vatheldi and their father's Uvæge, and two kings ruled over the Skrælings, who did not live in

houses but in caves or holes. On the other side opposite their land was a land where the people wore white clothes and carried before them poles with banners and shouted loudly. People think that this was Hvitramannaland. Karlsefne reached Greenland and passed the winter with Eirik the Red.

As they left Markland Bjarne Grimolfsson was driven into the Irish sea. Before they knew of it the ship began to sink; for it was worm-eaten. The afterboat, which had been smeared with seal tar and was secure against the worm, could hold half the crew. At the suggestion of Bjarne they drew lots about going into the afterboat. The afterboat reached Dublin in Ireland and related these occurrences, but Bjarne Grimolfsson and his companions were supposed to have perished in the worm-sea; for nothing has been heard of them since.

Of the great expedition that sailed with Karlsefne and Snorre only about 65 people returned to Greenland. The following summer Karlsefne sailed back to Iceland and settled with his wife Gudrid at Reynines.

I shall only call attention to the fact that we have in this saga the description of a real land, which we identify as Newfoundland. The northernmost point ends in Kjalarnes, the Atlantic coast trends eastward and the west coast line runs north and south. Fish and game abandon the northern part in the fall and remain in the southern part all winter as they did at Straumfjord and Hop. It is plain that the one who has told the story of this saga has had some knowledge of the conditions in Newfoundland. To use the same test that we followed in the *Flateyrbok* we can say that the Karlsefne saga is genuine, because it gives us in outline a correct description of the conditions that prevail there.

The same voyage in the *Flateyrbok* runs in this manner. The same summer a ship came from Norway to Greenland. The commander was Thorfin Karlsefne, the son of Thord Hesthovdi, a rich man. He passed the winter at Brattalid and married Gudrid, the widow of Thorstein. As before there was much talk of making a voyage to Vinland, and Gudrid as well as the others urged him to do

so. Karlsefne decided to make an expedition to Vinland and collected a crew of sixty men and five women. They agreed to divide equally the profits of the voyage. They took along all kinds of cattle and intended to settle in the land, if it were feasible. Leif allowed them to use his houses in Vinland. They went to sea and reached without any accident Leif's booths. Finding a large whale that had drifted ashore, they cut it up and it was good, and the cattle thrived on the grass. They found grapes and game of all kinds. They cut timber and laid it on a cliff to dry.

The following summer they saw Skrälings who came in great numbers from the forest. The cattle were nearby and a bull began to bellow and low very loudly (*belja ok gjalla ákafliga hátt*). The Skrälings were terrified and hurried with their packs to the houses of the Norsemen and wanted to force their way in; but Karlsefne ordered the doors closed. Neither understood the others' language. Then the Skrälings opened their packs and showed them gray furs, sables and all kinds of peltries. They desired to barter especially for weapons; but Karlsefne forbade that. The women brought milk, and as soon as the natives saw it they wanted nothing else. The trade was of that kind, remarks the saga, that the Skrälings carried off their purchases in their stomachs, while the Norsemen retained their packs and furs. Karlsefne built a strong palisade about the house. At this time Gudrid bore a son, whom they called Snorre. At the beginning of winter the Skrälings returned in greater numbers and with the same wares. When the women came again with the milk, they were satisfied and cast their packs over the palisade. After a while one of Karlsefne's men killed a Skräling, who tried to take away their weapons. Then the Skrälings made a hasty departure, leaving behind their packs and clothing.

Karlsefne knew that they would come the third time for war and in great numbers and took the necessary precautions. Ten men were to appear on the nes, the others were to make a clearing for the cattle, when the natives came from the forest, and they were to let the bull advance in front of them. On the one side was the forest and on the other the lake. The Skrälings came and attacked them



just where they had expected the battle to take place. A battle was fought in which no Norseman, but many Skrælings fell. Among the Skrælings was a large and handsome man who appeared to be their chieftain. A native picked up a Norse ax, looked at it, swung it and hit a neighbor who instantly fell dead. The handsome man took the ax, looked at it a while and flung it as far as he could into the lake. Thereupon the Skrælings fled hastily into the forest and were not seen any more.

They remained there that winter. When spring came Karlsefne was minded to return to Greenland. They made ready and took along a cargo of *vinvid*, grapes and furs. They sailed away and came safely to Eiriksford, where they spent the following winter.

Karlsefne can not have made two voyages to Vinland. This is the same account that we have in the Karlsefne saga transferred to Leif's Vinland. The whale and the nes make their second appearance. This account reveals no new geography: it is Leif's booths as we know them from earlier accounts. All goes remarkably well. In place of a long series of hardships in Straumfjord and Hop, we have almost altogether sunshine and good luck. Instead of a bad whale that made them sick at Straumfjord we have here a good whale; instead of a severe winter, famine and loss of life we have a mild climate, abundant food and a successful battle. Finally they sail away in their ship laden with the good things of the land.<sup>36</sup>

## FREYDIS, HELGE AND FINBOGE

**A** GAIN there was much talk about making a voyage to Vinland, because such a voyage appeared to be both profitable and honorable, says the *Flateyrbok*. The same summer that Karlsefne returned from Vinland there arrived in Greenland a ship from Norway owned by two brothers, Helge and Finboge. They were Icelanders from one of the east fjords and stayed in Greenland that winter. When Freydis, the daughter of Eirik the Red, who with her husband Thorvard lived at Gardar, heard of their arrival, she went to see them. She proposed that they make a voyage with her to Vinland and that they share with her one half of all the good things that they might get. When they had agreed to this she went to her brother Leif and asked him to give her the houses which he had built in Vinland. Leif said he would not give them to her, but allow her to use them. The agreement with the brothers was, that each ship should have a crew of thirty able-bodied men besides the women. But Freydis immediately broke the agreement by taking on board and concealing five more men, which the brothers were not aware of before they reached Vinland. Now they went to sea and were to sail together as much as possible. The brothers, however, arrived a little sooner and carried their cargo into Leif's booths, taking it for granted that they would share every thing equally. When Freydis came, she took it ill that the brothers had taken their things into Leif's house, since he had given it to her and not to them. After some words the brothers carried their goods out and built a house of their own farther from the sea on the shore of the lake. Meanwhile Freydis had her men fell timber to load her ship. Now

winter set in and the brothers proposed to take up games and have entertainments. So it continued for a while, until the people disagreed. There arose dissensions and the games came to an end and there were no meetings between the houses till far into the winter.

One morning Freydis rose early and dressed herself, but did not put on shoes. She put on her husband's cloak and walked barefoot through the dewy grass to the house of the brothers. A man had just gone out and left the door half open. She opened it wide and stood in the doorway without saying anything. Finboge, who lay awake at the other end of the house, asked her why she came there. She wanted him to get up and come out and talk with her. They sat down on a log by the wall of the house. "How do you like this place?" said Freydis. "The country is good, but the quarrel," said he, "which has arisen between us without my making it is bad." "You are right," said she, "and I think so too; but my errand here is to trade ships with you; for you have a larger ship than I and I want to sail away from here." "That I will do, if you desire," said he.

Thereupon she walked home and Finboge went back to bed. As she lay down in her bed, her cold feet awoke her husband who asked why she was so wet and cold. In a great rage she told him that she had gone to the house of the brothers to trade ships and get a bigger one and that they had struck and abused her. "But you, weakling, will not avenge my shame nor your own, and now I find that I am not in Greenland and I will separate from you, if you do not avenge this."

Thorvard was overcome by her passion and ordered his men to rise and arm themselves. Then entering the house of the brothers they found the men asleep and bound them. As they were led out, one by one, Freydis had them killed. Five women remained whom the men refused to kill. Freydis seized an ax and left them all dead. After this terrible deed they returned to their house and Freydis seemed pleased with her evil plan. She told her men that if it were fated them to return to Greenland, she would contrive the death of any one of them who would reveal these events.

They should say in Greenland that the others had stayed behind, when they came away.

Early in the spring they loaded the ship which the brothers had owned with all the good things which they could obtain and which the ship could hold. They sailed away and had a good voyage and came to Eiriksfiord early in the summer. Karlsefne was there with his ship ready to sail, waiting for a good wind. People said that never had a more richly laden ship gone from Greenland than the one that Karlsefne sailed.

Freydis went to Gardar and settled down in her own home. She gave liberal presents to her men, as she wanted them to keep secret her crimes. But they were not so close-mouthed about her evil deeds and wickedness but that the secret leaked out in course of time. When these rumors reached her brother, Leif, he took three of her men and made them all confess at the same time and their testimonies agreed. Leif felt grieved, but did not want to treat his sister as she deserved and only predicted that her offspring would not fare well. And so it came to pass that all thought ill of them from that time.

Karlsefne sailed away, passed Iceland and came to Norway and sold his wares. The following spring he made ready his ship and sailed back to Iceland and settled there.

This is not a story of discovery. No new geography is described nor are new points added to the old ground. It is the story of a commercial enterprise laid at Leif's booths in Vinland—a story of blood and horror such as have been enacted in early days in many lands for the sake of gain. In the former narratives we have followed the rule that the story is true if the geography is correct. It does not follow, however, at this stage that the story is fictitious because the geography is omitted. For a time must needs have come when they dropped the geography and turned their attention to something else.

The extreme ease with which they reach Vinland is noticeable. None of the leaders had been in Vinland before, and yet both the ships pick their way without difficulty. Still there is nothing remarkable in this. It is the fourth expedition and there were no doubt many Greenlanders who by

this time could steer a ship to Vinland without mishap in summer weather.

In the conversation between Freydis and Finboge it appears that the latter is willing to stay behind, while the former wants to go back to Greenland. Had they reached the point where some were indifferent about going back and were willing to make a home on this side of the ocean? It is plain from the saga narrative that the Norsemen somewhere learned and observed the manners and traits of the Indians. Good judges admit that a description of the behavior of the natives such as we have in the sagas could not have been written without actual observation of a more extended nature than we have mentioned in the sagas, and we have no record of any sojourn among the natives. It is quite possible that after the way was once found there were visits made into the interior of which we have no records, just as in later times there were among the Indians many Frenchmen of whom there is no mention in any records. If outlaws and adventurers sought the wilds of North Greenland or Labrador, why should they not have gone up the St. Lawrence and become acquainted with the Indians?

We are astonished to find that Karlsefne is yet in Greenland. We had expected that he would have sailed away the summer following his return from Vinland. The saga seems to find it so natural that it does not even offer an explanation. We may assume that the cargo he brought from Vinland consisted mostly of timber which he disposed of in Greenland, and that he there bought a new cargo of Greenland wares, hides, buckskins, seal skins, walrus skins and teeth for Norway and that this required the additional time. In the *Flateyrbok* Karlsefne comes from Norway and goes back to Norway. The absence of Karlsefne is the same in both sagas, five winters and parts of six summers. But the distribution of the time is different. In the *Karlsefne* saga he spends three winters in Vinland and two in Greenland; in this saga he spends two winters in Vinland and three in Greenland.

About the year 1075 we have a distant echo of the discovery of Vinland in Adam of Bremen's account of the islands in the north. He speaks of Greenland as an island

in the ocean beyond Iceland and Norway. The King of Denmark told him that many had found in that ocean also an island called Vinland, where vines grew wild and bore good grapes and where self-sown wheat was abundant. Beyond this island there was no habitable land, but all was full of boundless ice and fog. The conception seems to be that Vinland lies beyond Greenland and is a wonderland of grapes bordering on the frozen ocean. How little he understood the real situation we see also from the statement that he wants to be believed, because he had it from the lips of the king and from the reliable accounts of the Danes. The sagas and the Icelandic geographers do not ask to be believed; but they give us a geography which we have since found to be true. That Adam of Bremen did not obtain his information from the Greenlanders or the Icelanders but from the Danes is also apparent from the fact that he has a geographical conception which is on a par with that in *Historia Norwegiæ* and on the early maps. As far as I have been able to learn, the correct understanding of the geography of the North Atlantic and the New World is in those times confined to the Greenlanders and Icelanders. The report of Adam of Bremen is of little value beyond the curious fact that he mentions Vinland in the second half of the eleventh century.

The last mention of Vinland in the old records is found in the Icelandic Annals against the year 1121. It states that Eirik Uppsi, bishop of Greenland, went to find Vinland. There is no record of his ordination, and some have thought that he was one of those early missionaries whom Are Frode styles bishops. Nothing more is known of this expedition. As a new bishop was appointed already in 1124, they appear to have felt sure that Eirik did not any longer stand in the way. It would seem that he traveled in the interest of the church, whether he went to Christianize the heathen or he had heard that there were enough outlaws and adventurers of his own people to work among in those parts.

Finally we have in the Icelandic Annals the mention of a Greenland ship that had gone to Markland presumably for a cargo of timber. It had seventeen or eighteen men on board and was driven eastward in a storm and came in

1347 without anchor into outer Straumfjord in southwestern Iceland. Had it returned without mishap to Greenland and not reached Iceland, we should have known nothing of that occurrence. This incidental record is the strongest possible evidence that the Greenlanders in the fourteenth century still knew the way to Labrador and were probably in the habit of making annual visits there.

## NORSE LEGENDS

OUTSIDE of the Vinland sagas we hear of men who have drifted across the ocean and come to unknown lands and have either perished there or returned and told of their adventures without leaving any further traces. These legends appear somewhat mythical and to some extent savor of sailors' yarns. They seem to have originated in Ireland, on the Orkneys, or in Iceland, which are all remote from America. That they to some extent have been influenced by Irish sea-tales, or the Voyages of St. Brandan or Great Ireland is very likely. The real interest in the Vinland Voyages was largely confined to Greenland, which was advantageously situated for sailing to the mainland of America, and to the home of Eirik the Red, which for those times harbored navigators of unusual intelligence.

The legends about Are, Gudleif and Bjørn do not seem to have any other purpose than to give expression to the belief in a land on the other side of the sea. I repeat them here to show how accounts of this kind differ from historical narratives. They are hearsay reports of an indefinite character. The land lies far out in the ocean and has neither local nor geographical names. How much more definite are the accounts of Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald! Bjarne told of his adventure to Earl Eirik of Norway and was criticised by his men for not having made further investigations. Leif visited Bjarne at Herjolfsnes, bought his ship and obtained detailed information about his sailing route. Thorvald followed a prescribed course to Vinland. From there he made new discoveries and assigned local names. It is a mistake to lump legends and sagas together and call them Irish myths transplanted to Iceland. These adven-



tures are supposed to have occurred at about the same time as the real discoveries and may simply be distant echoes of the real events.

The earliest is the legend of Are Marsson of Reykjanes in Iceland, who was driven away over the sea in a tempest to Hvítramannaland, or Great Ireland. It lies in the ocean six *doegr* west of Ireland near Vinland the Good. Are was baptized there and not allowed to escape. Hrafn, the Limerick sailor, who had long lived in Limerick and sailed between Limerick and Iceland, was the first to tell the tale. According to Are Frode Torkel Gellisson said that Icelanders had said that they had heard Thorfin Earl of the Orkneys say that Are Marsson had been recognized in Hvítramannaland, where he was held in great esteem, but not allowed to depart.

The Eyrbyggja saga relates that Björn Asbrandsson, a noted viking, sailed from Hraunhafn in Iceland to go to Norway. He met a northeast wind that blew long into the summer. Since then no one heard of that ship for a long time. Toward the end of the reign of Olaf the Saint Gudleif Gudlaugsson sailed from Iceland to Dublin. On his return voyage to Iceland he sailed along the west coast of Ireland. A strong wind blew from the east northeast and drove him far out upon the sea to the west southwest. The summer was far spent and they were weary of the sea, when they saw a great land which no one knew. They sailed into a large harbor and found many people who seemed to speak Irish. There came hundreds of men who seized them and took them into the interior and placed them before an assembly to be judged. The Norsemen did not understand the language, but as far as they could make out, some wanted to put them to death and others to make them slaves. While this was going on, a body of men rode up. Under a banner rode a large and dignified old man with white hair, to whom all showed great deference. He ordered Gudleif and his men to approach and spoke to them in Icelandic. He questioned them minutely about the principal men and things in the west of Iceland, about Borgarfjörð and Breiðfjörð. After long deliberations the old chieftain helped them to escape and sent with them presents to friends in

Iceland. Late in the fall they arrived in Ireland, spent the winter at Dublin and the following summer they reached Iceland, where Gudleif delivered the presents and told the tale. People in Iceland believed for sooth that the strange man was the lost champion of Breidivik, Björn Asbrandsson.

The civilization of Hvítramannaland is European, apparently Irish, and has little or nothing in common with the natives of America. The people were Christian and dressed in white garments. Are Marsson, who left Iceland as a heathen, was baptized there. The natives have horses, which were unknown in America till the arrival of the Spaniards. Björn Asbrandsson rides under a banner and leads a troop of horsemen. The statement in the *Karlsefne* saga that in Hvítramannaland people walked in white garments and shouted (chanted) loudly, as they carried before them staffs with banners, reminds us of a procession of monks or priests.

## THE VIEW HELD IN THE TWO SAGAS

### SUMMARY

**T**HOUGH it is now over 200 years since Torfason published his *Vinlandia*, we are not yet agreed upon a single place on our shores visited by the Norsemen. The location of Vinland is held by various authors to have been anywhere from Labrador to Florida. We know that Leif Eiriksson sailed from Eiriksfiord in the Eastern Settlement and Thorfin Karlsefne from the Western Settlement in Greenland, but there is no agreement as to where they first saw land or went ashore. To learn the direction in which they sailed we look in vain to the commentators. Rafn makes them sail nearly straight south from Greenland, but Hovgaard makes them sail nearly northwest. Between these extremes we have numerous suggestions which are all equally hypothetical. For a divergence of 90 degrees on the compass there is no authority in the sagas, which are the final source. If we can not fix more definitely the course which these navigators followed from Greenland, we shall look in vain for a solution of the Vinland question.

To enable us to follow the sailing routes described in the old sagas we must in the first place understand the Norse conception of northern geography. The northern countries are the starting point for these discoveries and it is evident, therefore, that we must know how the Norsemen conceived that they were situated with reference to each other. We must be right on this point in order to arrive at definite conclusions. Investigators have failed to see the bearing of this upon the entire controversy. In their eagerness to point out Helluland, Markland and Vinland they have neg-

lected to make sure of their starting point. Firmly convinced that they could locate the new discoveries they passed over the chapter that immediately precedes them—they omitted to show how they reached the New World. In order to locate with certainty their first landfall, it will be necessary to know their general conception of northern geography.

Several obstacles have stood in the way of giving a rational explanation to the voyages of the Norsemen. The text had not been studied with sufficient care, and important points had escaped the notice of the commentators. This distorted the conception of northern geography and made it impossible to follow the sailing directions. So far scholars have found no mention of Baffin Land, which from Greenland forms a necessary link in the discovery of the mainland to the south. It was difficult to believe that the Norsemen discovered the distant New England, if they were unable to find the nearby Baffin Land, which was, so to speak, the stepping-stone from Greenland to the mainland. As I have shown in another chapter, there are in the Norse sagas and in the Icelandic geographies frequent mentions of Baffin Land, which the Norsemen supposed to be a continuation of North-Greenland and to lie about where we find it on our maps. It appears that the Norsemen early discovered Baffin Land, and from there worked their way southward. Upon the discovery of Baffin Land followed a series of discoveries to the south. The fact that the Norsemen thus cautiously crept along the coasts from land to land did not prevent more daring navigators from striking across the ocean from Greenland to Labrador.

Another error even more confusing has obscured the interpretation of the sagas and prevented the understanding of the narrative. Commentators have been of the opinion that the old Norsemen placed Helluland and Markland to the south of Greenland. Gustav Storm especially insisted on this view and based his argument for the location of Vinland on this flimsy conception. This view he thought was found in a fragmentary bit of Icelandic geography, which at first sight seems to favor that interpretation. The facts, however, are quite different.

The Flateyrbok, Orvar-Odds Saga and Karlsefne's saga 770c state expressly that Helluland and Markland lie to the southwest of the Eastern Settlement or the southern point of Greenland. Karlsefne's saga AM. 544 (also AM. 557) and all Icelandic geographies place Helluland and Markland south of Baffin Land. Thus it appears that the Norsemen had in the main the same conception of the North Atlantic countries as we have.

The two Vinland sagas contain about 70 references to sailing routes and distances. These references are scattered in such a way throughout the story that they are unobtrusive and pass almost unnoticed. Editors have generally made use of them when they accorded with their own theories; otherwise they have explained them away or passed over them altogether. It occurred to me that it would be worth while to follow these sailing directions closely and without deviation, in order to test them and, if possible, to understand still better their conception of northern geography. The results were highly satisfactory. The narratives appeared to contain distances and sailing directions that are as accurate as we can expect them, considering the means at the authors' disposal. Although they were not made by chart and compass, they are still valuable and show a clear and practical knowledge of the North Atlantic coasts.

Starting from two fixed points we can obtain results that far surpass those of former investigators. To be sure the *doegr* is an imperfect standard of measurement, but it is superior to no measurement. Regarding the location of the new lands discovered by the Norsemen there is no contradiction in the two sagas. Both start out with the same conception and agree so far as they go. Instead of contradicting and destroying each other, as they are generally supposed to do, they support each other and the one often supplies what the other lacks. In course of time, however, a change took place by which Karlsefne's saga shut out the Flateyrbok and the Flateyrbok swallowed up Straumfjord and Hop by transferring Karlsefne's expedition to Leif's booths in Vinland. It is the study of sailing routes as much as anything else that has given me a clue to the correct understanding of these early discoveries. That the sail-

ing directions and the distances have been so carefully preserved, we owe largely to the conviction that they were important. Although scribes at times made changes in the narrative, their ignorance of the real geography probably prevented them from changing the routes and distances. They rather copied them mechanically as containing important information.

When we take all the circumstances into consideration, we shall find that the sagas give a reasonably good and trustworthy account of the routes that the Norsemen followed and the coasts that they visited. If we proceed step by step and follow rigidly the story of the sagas in the manner indicated, we shall be able to locate with reasonable certainty the lands discovered by the Norsemen. I shall here only review very briefly the accounts of these discoveries as they are told in the sagas, and in the following chapters endeavor to prove my contentions by a more minute study of the narrative.

The two sagas that relate these exploits each presents a distinct phase of the events. The story of the *Flateyrbok* gives an account of the deeds of the family of Eirik the Red and the Greenlanders. The story of the *Karlsefne* saga describes in detail the expedition of Karlsefne and the Icelanders. Karlsefne was an Iclander, resided in Iceland and was there looked upon as a national hero. As long as it was possible to keep apart the stories of the Greenlanders and the Icelanders, there was no quarrel between the two sagas; but as soon as the geography of the new discoveries became confused and indistinct, the claims of the Greenlanders and Icelanders are sure to clash. The inevitable confusion that thus resulted from the counterclaims of the Greenlanders and the Icelanders I shall attempt to disentangle and to some extent endeavor to restore the original form of the narrative.

The *Flateyrbok* relates how Bjarne Herjolfsson was driven out of his course and saw the east coast of America from Newfoundland to North Labrador, whence he crossed to Greenland. Spurred on by the spirit of adventure, Leif Eiriksson set out from Eiriksfiord in Greenland to explore the lands that Bjarne had seen. After landing in North

and South Labrador Leif sailed from the Strait of Belle Isle two *doegr* southwest along the coast of Labrador and Quebec to the island of Anticosti, which lies to the north of the land of Gaspé. Sailing westward from the Strait between Anticosti and Gaspé along the south bank of the St. Lawrence River, he found in the neighborhood of 47° a land abounding in grapes, which he called Vinland. Two years later his brother Thorvald on an expedition to Vinland seems to have circumnavigated the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He reached Vinland by the same route as Leif. The following summer he sailed eastward from Leif's booths and cruised east of the land (of Gaspé and New Brunswick). Thereupon he sailed north along the west coast of Newfoundland till he broke the keel of his ship at Cape Norman (Kjalarnes). After putting in a new keel they raised the old one on the nes and sailed eastward along the coast past the land. On the east coast Thorvald fell in a battle with the Skrælings and was buried at Krossanes. The saga of Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald developed in Greenland, where the family resided, and was late in coming to Iceland.

The Karlsefne saga relates how Karlsefne came to Greenland and went on a colonizing expedition to Vinland. He sailed out of Eiríksfjörð with three ships and 140 or 160 men on board. Instead of crossing the open sea to Labrador, as Leif and Thorvald had done, he chose a longer and more circuitous route by way of the Western Settlement and Baffin Land, which had been discovered by Eirík the Red and called Vestre Ubygd (Western wilds). From an island, Bjarney, on the coast of Baffin Land, he sailed two *doegr* to the south and came to North Labrador.

Here the two sailing routes meet and determine the location of Helluland—a land of rocks and snow-capped mountains without grass or trees. Helluland is that part of Labrador which lies north of the tree-line. Markland begins near Nain, or about 57° N., and includes the rest of Labrador, which is wooded. Following the south-easterly trend of the Labrador coast, he came in two *doegr* to Hamilton Inlet in Markland. Another two *doegr* brought him opposite Kjalarnes, or Cape Norman, in the Strait of Belle Isle.

From the Strait Karlsefne should have sailed southwest to Gaspé like Leif and Thorvald, but exhausted by the voyage, which in this way had become long and tedious, he began to look for Vinland as soon as he crossed the Strait of Belle Isle. Sailing south along the east coast they settled down for the winter at Straumfjord, which they found to be quite different from what they expected in Vinland. There appeared to be two opinions as to the location of Vinland and the ships separated. Thorhal Veideman, the old pilot of Eirik the Red, sailed back north to the strait, passed Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir and was pushing westward into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, when a fierce gale from the west drove him back through the Strait and east to Ireland. Karlsefne continued to sail south along the east coast a long time and spent the second winter at a place they called Hop. It was mild and abounded in game of all kinds, but had no grapes. Soon the natives became hostile and made it inadvisable to stay. So they sailed back north to Straumfjord, where they passed the third winter. Disappointed in every way they returned after three years to Greenland with one ship and about 65 men. The following summer Karlsefne returned to Iceland and settled with his wife Gudrid at Reynines on Skagafjord.

The sailing routes described in the two sagas show that for the accounts of Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald we must turn to the *Flateyrbok*, and for that of Karlsefne we must follow his saga. In this way one saga will supply the defects of the other and the two together form a connected narrative. Helluland and Markland are common to both sagas; Newfoundland occurs in both sagas without receiving a name. Bjarne sailed along its east coast and Thorvald along its west coast and Karlsefne sailed south and north along both coasts. The south coast is never mentioned. Karlsefne set out from Greenland with the avowed purpose of finding Leif's Vinland. For a brief time they were content at Straumfjord, but the severe winter that followed with hunger and suffering dispelled the illusion. Hop was far more favorable, but the hostility of the natives cut short their stay and want of grapes dispelled their dream of finding Vinland. However, after the return of the expedition



to Iceland it became the vogue there to speak of Karlsefne's discoveries as Vinland. In course of time the saga of Karlsefne came to be regarded as the Vinland saga in Iceland and superseded all other versions of these exploits. The partisans of Karlsefne would not hear of any other Vinland than that explored by him. It was generally accepted in Iceland that Leif had discovered Vinland, but in their ignorance of the true geography of America they connected it with Karlsefne's discoveries on the east coast. In reconciling the work of the two men they assigned to Leif the accidental discovery of a point on the east coast and to Karlsefne the exploration of the country. They related that Leif on his return from Norway to Greenland was driven out of his course and came upon unknown lands. Leif plays the part of Bjarne in the *Flateyrbok*. With the geography of the *Flateyrbok* such a view is untenable and appears to have grown up in Iceland.

The saga of Eirik the Red and his family in Greenland and the saga of Karlsefne in Iceland seem to have developed independently for at least two centuries. When at length they attempted to combine them, they found that the only part that suited both was the account of Eirik the Red in Greenland. Their ignorance of American geography was so complete that they could see no relation between the voyages of the two sagas. Counter-claims were made by the partisans of the two families and a strife arose which has continued down to our day.

## TWO TRADITIONS

WRITERS assume that the tradition which we have in the Hauksbok, AM. 544, is older than that which we have in the Flateyrbok, because the Hauksbok is older than the Flateyrbok. Hauksbok dates from 1305-34, while the Flateyrbok comes from 1387-95, with an interval of 53 years. But since both accounts, both the Karlsefne saga and the Grænlendinga þáttir, go back to older codices, one can not be sure that the relation between these was the same as between the present codices. If for instance the Flateyrbok could point to an older architype than the Hauksbok, or if the Hauksbok had accidentally been lost, then the standing of the two accounts would be reversed. Regarding the age of the two traditions we can not draw conclusions from our present codices.

My opinion is, that the Flateyrbok has a tradition that is somewhat older than that of the Hauksbok. For this view it is possible to give many reasons.

The Flateyrbok gives an account of five voyages to Vinland, while the Karlsefne saga gives an account of only one. It is now generally assumed that the two Vinland sagas contradict each other and that, if one is true, the other is false. To me it does not appear so. As I understand the Karlsefne saga, it was originally the story of Karlsefne's voyage without reference to the other voyages and without placing it in the regular order of sequence. In course of time they forgot or suppressed in Iceland the other voyages and made Karlsefne's the only Vinland voyage. By adding the accidental discovery of Leif and the naming of Helluland and Markland it came to appear that

this was the only Vinland saga and that it was in conflict with the *Flateyrbok*.

Several writers have called attention to the similarity that exists between Bjarne's adventure and Leif's accidental visit to Vinland. Both were on their way to Greenland and both drifted out of their course southwest to the American continent. Bjarne followed the coast as far as North Labrador and cut across the sea to Greenland, acting like an able and experienced sailor. After a brief stay in Vinland Leif put to sea again and seems to have sailed straight to Greenland. Leif's voyage resembles in this respect that of Gunleiv Gunlaugsson, who was driven in a storm from the west coast of Ireland to Hvitramannaland and after a brief stay sailed back in the fall to Ireland. It has the air of a fairy tale and does not take into account the difficulties connected with such a voyage in those times. This tradition has come into existence after the discovery of America. It is not likely that Karlsefne on the strength of such a sailor's yarn would put to sea on the chance of finding the place to which Leif had drifted. On the other hand the account in the *Flateyrbok* is far more probable. Eirik the Red had already explored the west coast of Greenland and found Baffin Land, and adventurous fishermen had no doubt gone farther south. Bjarne Herjolfsson had skirted the coast from Newfoundland to Labrador and crossed over to Greenland. Leif and Thorvald had explored the St. Lawrence basin and made important discoveries. The route was fairly well known and it was high time to think of colonizing. That Karlsefne lost his way or chose another route in the Strait of Belle Isle, is due to some cause that the saga does not make clear. It is far easier to believe that Karlsefne set out after these voyages than that he attempted to colonize after the accidental voyage of Leif as told in his saga.

Kjalarnes occurs in both sagas. The *Flateyrbok* relates that Thorvald the second summer that he was in Vinland cruised east of Gaspé and New Brunswick and thereupon sailed north along the west coast of Newfoundland, when a violent storm drove him on the rocks and crushed his keel at Cape Norman. When they had repaired the

vessel, they raised the old keel on the nes and called it Kjalarnes and continued their way eastward along the land to the east coast.

Two years later Karlsefne came sailing from the north off the Labrador coast and saw the nes on the other side of the Strait. He tacked along the Labrador coast, crossed at the west end of the Strait and followed in the opposite direction past the long and sandy strands till they at length reached the nes, where they found a keel and called it Kjalarnes.

Since this nes in every respect corresponds to the nes where Thorvald broke his ship, we must assume that the keel which they found was the keel that Thorvald and his men raised there. For those who knew the geography it was clear that Kjalarnes in both sagas was the same place without giving the full account of Thorvald's mishap. The oral tradition in this place would naturally be as explicit as necessary, while the literary saga contents itself with this brief reference. By recognizing Kjalarnes and Thorvald's keel the author of the Karlsefne saga betrays his acquaintance with Thorvald's voyage and Leif's Vinland.

From Kjalarnes they moved on to Straumfjord, where it looked promising in the beginning. But when they found no grapes and had to endure hardships and were on the point of starving during the severe winter, they felt convinced that they were not in Vinland. Karlsefne wanted to seek Vinland to the southward along the east coast. Thorhal Veideman, who had long lived in the family of Eirik the Red and was familiar with the route followed by Leif and Thorvald, wanted to seek Vinland toward the west. He obtained one ship and nine men and sailed northward past Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir, and when he was about to tack westward a gale met him and drove him eastward to Ireland.

The notable fact here is, that Thorhal chose the route that led to Leif's Vinland. With a favorable breeze he would have reached Leif's booths. It matters not whether according to one text he would have followed the Labrador coast to Anticosti and Gaspé as Leif did, or according to the other text he would have followed the Newfoundland

coast past Prince Edward Island to Gaspé along Thorvald's route.

From Straumfjord Karlsefne sailed south to Hop. On low-lands they found self-sown wheat fields and in higher places they found "vinvid" (grape vines) but no "vinber" (grapes). They called the place Hop, not Vinland. Still in aftertimes in Iceland they called it Vinland and ascribed to it many traits that rightfully belonged to Leif's Vinland. A stream flows also here from the interior into a lake and thence over sandbars into the sea, so that it is possible to enter only at high tide. The climate is mild and there falls little or no snow in winter. Attempts of this nature to describe Hop like Leif's Vinland show that Leif's Vinland was the original Vinland and that Hop tried to vie with it. It comes so natural. Even Storm, who discarded the Flateyrbok, transformed Hop into Vinland, because Leif there found grapes. In the same manner he determined the location of Hop by the astronomical observation which Leif made in Vinland. In course of time they went so far in Iceland, that they suppressed Leif's achievements and asserted that Karlsefne had discovered Vinland (*Landnáma* 3, 10).

As stated above, the Greenlanders were probably the first to discover the American Continent. They lived nearest and had therefore the best chance of reaching the mainland. Existence was difficult in Greenland, and its inhabitants were forced to resort to desperate means to sustain life. They obtained grain and timber from Norway; but the way was long and they felt a constant desire to find them in a nearer place. Drift-wood they found up the west coast on Kroksfjardarheide; but for bows and other purposes they needed growing timber. The Icelanders were interested in new lands, but their interest sprang from scientific curiosity and love of adventure and not as in Greenland from economic reasons. There is incidental evidence outside of the Vinland sagas to show that the Greenlanders had found a wooded country. In the Greenland Annals we read that the Greenlanders were of the opinion that the driftwood gathering on the west coast of Greenland came from the bays of Markland. The Icelandic Annals report

that a ship which had sailed to Markland drifted without anchor in 1347 to Straumfjord in Iceland. It seems evident that this ship had gone to Markland for a cargo of timber. From remarks of this kind that have come to us by chance it appears that Markland was well known in Greenland.

The land explored by Karlsefne bears in the saga the name Straumfjord and Hop and not Vinland; but otherwise in Icelandic texts it is called Vinland. Thorhal Gamla-son, who accompanied Karlsefne, is twice called Vinlendingr in Grettir's saga. The Eyrbyggja Saga says that Snorre went with Karlsefne to Vinland the Good and fought with the Skrælings there in Vinland. Since Hop has traits that remind us of Vinland, as we have shown above, there is reason to believe that these come from Leif's Vinland.

The children of Eirik the Red take part in the Vinland voyages in both sagas. In the Flateyrbok each of them leads an expedition and plays important roles, while in the Karlsefne saga they are reduced to actors of second or third rate importance. Leif is driven out of his course and comes upon Vinland by chance; but does not know how to profit by his discovery; Thorstein conducts a fruitless expedition and does not reach Vinland in either saga; Thorvald and Freydis join the expedition of Karlsefne without affecting the course of events in a large measure. When we consider how differently the two sagas treat the family of Eirik the Red, we can hardly escape the conclusion that here lies the difference between the two. Was it the children of Eirik the Red and the Greenlanders, or was it Karlsefne and the Icelanders who especially deserved the credit of discovering and exploring the Western Continent? When we take all the points into consideration and carefully weigh the claims of both sides, we must conclude that the weight of evidence is in favor of the Greenlanders. For this reason we must consider the account of Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald which we have in the Flateyrbok as essentially correct and reliable, and that they precede the expedition of Karlsefne.

In narrating the same events the Karlsefne saga in several instances differs from the Flateyrbok and seems

to favor later views. I shall mention only a few; the observant reader will readily detect others.

In the account of Eirik's discovery of Greenland the *Flateyrbok* states that he sailed west from Snefellsnes in Iceland and came to land on the east coast of Greenland, in front of Midjökul, which is now called Bláserkr. The *Landnáma* has: "before Midjökul where it is called Bláserkr." *Hauksbok* has "to the jökul which is called Bláserkr." From this many have drawn the conclusion that Midjökul is an older name than Bláserkr of the same region. The evidence is not conclusive, but the former texts are fuller.

His first winter in Greenland Eirik spent on Eiriksey, near the middle of the West Bygd, according to the *Landnáma*, which is also the version of the *Flateyrbok*. Instead of this, the *Hauksbok* has "near the East Bygd." The context as well as the course of events show that the *Landnáma* is correct, and this is also the opinion of Finnur Jonsson.

The second summer Eirik sailed to the Vestri Obygd and assigned local names far and wide. The *Hauksbok* omits this statement, because, as it seems, it did not understand Vestri Obygd. The meaning of Vestri Obygd was then known to the *Landnáma* and not to the *Hauksbok*.

The *Flateyrbok* calls Eirik's wife Thorhild; the *Hauksbok* calls her Thjodhild, and the church that she built Thjodhildar Kirkja. It seems likely, as some have assumed, that her heathen name was Thorhild, which she changed to Thjodhild when she was baptized.

Leif called the first land that he came to Helluland, because it consisted of cliffs or rocks and was a stoneland without vegetation. It seemed to be one cliff or rock from the sea to the snow above. It resembled the mythical Helluland in North Greenland. The *Karlsefne* saga calls it Helluland because they saw many flat stones there. It is obvious that the story in the *Flateyrbok* is the original one. I was unable to learn of any tract of flat stones (hellur); but missionaries and travelers alike were struck by the correct description of the mountains in North Labrador as given in the *Flateyrbok*.

The *Karlsefne* saga introduces the land of the Unipeds and the mythical Hvítramannaland as real countries.

## THE TWO ACCOUNTS

**R**EGARDING the discovery of Vinland there are two accounts which writers have often discussed without arriving at any definite conclusion. The *Flateyrbok* relates that Bjarne Herjolfsson first saw land and that Leif Eiriksson later explored it and made further discoveries; *Karlsefne's* saga relates that Leif, when he returned from Norway, was driven out of his course and came upon lands of which he had no previous knowledge, and that Thorfin Karlsefne afterwards with three ships and a large company explored it. Each of these accounts is in full accord with the saga in which it occurs, and there is no glaring contradiction within each saga. The difficulty consists in reconciling the two accounts. When we consider the location of the two Vinlands, we see that it must be so and could not have been otherwise.

According to *Karlsefne's* saga and several Icelandic geographies *Karlsefne's* Vinland was located along the east coast. According to the *Flateyrbok* Leif's Vinland was situated in the interior along a north coast. Leif's Vinland, therefore, does not correspond to *Karlsefne's*. But since the tradition in Iceland required that Leif discovered Vinland, it became necessary to give to the account such a turn that it would fit *Karlsefne's* Vinland. The account of Bjarne suits *Karlsefne's* Vinland. When a ship came drifting like that of Bjarne, it would come ashore on *Karlsefne's* and not on Leif's Vinland. Since the geography of the *Flateyrbok* confirms our conviction that we are dealing with real occurrences, we are obliged to assume that Leif's accidental visit to Vinland is a later form of the tradition. The account in the *Flateyrbok* agrees so well



with Eirik the Red and Greenland and the account in the Karlsefne's saga fits the family of Karlsefne and Iceland so well, that we can not escape the conclusion that one saga grew up in Greenland and the other in Iceland. Leif's connection with Karlsefne's saga is loose. Any other name could have done the same service if the tradition had not maintained that Leif first discovered Vinland. Karlsefne's saga makes Leif play the role of Bjarne.

There is nothing in Karlsefne's saga that indicates that Karlsefne had knowledge of Leif's accidental discovery of Vinland before he set out upon his voyage. On the contrary we have several indications to show that he understood the situation about as we find it portrayed in the Flateyarbok. The keel which Karlsefne and his men found on Kjalarnes is the keel which Thorvald and his men set up in that place according to the Flateyarbok. Thorhal's unfortunate attempt to find Vinland by sailing past Kjalarnes and Furdustrandir and thence westward reminds us of Leif's Vinland to the west. Since Karlsefne chose the northerly course past Baffin Land and came from the north to Helluland, he landed farther north than Leif, who set sail from Eiriksfiord to the southwest. The result of this was, that Karlsefne, as we have seen above, went ashore in Markland farther north than Leif. From Markland Karlsefne sailed two *doegr* south to Kjalarnes, Karlsefne's Vinland. Bjarne, who came from the south, sighted Markland in the Strait of Belle Isle, whence Leif sailed two *doegr* to the southwest to the island of Anticosti, lying off Vinland. Both sailed from the place where they landed in Markland, two *doegr* to Vinland; by sailing southwest Leif came to a land west of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the other by sailing two *doegr* south came to Newfoundland. It appears from the saga that Karlsefne supposed Vinland to begin with the Strait. There he found along the Strait a north shore and an island, Belle Isle, off the northeast point, which he may have mistaken for Anticosti, off Cape Gaspé. Karlsefne explored carefully the whole shore in the hope, perhaps, of finding Leif's booths. East of Kjalarnes he sent ashore two Scotch runners to go southward and explore the country. They returned, one with an ear of wheat and the other with a cluster of grapes; but Karlsefne was not fully satis-

fied and sailed on. One cluster of grapes was not enough to make a grapeland. At Straumfjord it looked promising in the beginning; but a severe winter and hardships with starvation staring them in the face changed their minds. All were satisfied that Straumfjord was not in Vinland. At Hop, in the southern part of Newfoundland, far more favorable conditions prevailed and a climate that most resembled Leif's Vinland; but neither there did they find grapes, and without grapes there could be no Vinland.

The occurrence of the name Vinland is somewhat peculiar in this saga. We have Helluland and Markland and we hear how they were named; but we never read that Vinland was named, nor is it ever stated that they arrived there. The reason appears to be that they never found grapes. And yet the saga seems to take it for granted that Vinland received its name about as it is told in the *Flateyjarbók*. Karlsefne and his party were never sure that they had found Vinland. Yet in Iceland they seemed to cling to the view that Vinland reached from Kjalarnes to Hop. This view seemed to be founded on the conviction that the land beyond Markland was Vinland. For us who know the location of the different countries and know where Leif and Karlsefne sailed, it is evident that Karlsefne never reached Leif's Vinland. That it also appeared doubtful to Karlsefne and his people whether they ever reached Vinland, we gather both from the account in the saga and from the Icelandic geography, AM. 192: "It is told that Karlsefne cut a tree for a husasnotra and went thereupon to seek Vinland the Good and came to a place where they supposed this land to be, but they were not able to explore it or take possession of it."

Hostilities with the natives forced them to return to Straumfjord. After another disagreeable winter at Straumfjord they sailed back to Greenland without feeling fully satisfied that they had seen Vinland. Yet we read in AM. 544: "When they sailed from Vinland, they had a south wind and came to Markland." While AM. 557 relates that they were in Straumfjord the third winter, and when they sailed away they had a south wind and came to Markland. This is the only place where Karlsefne's discovery is called Vinland in his saga. In view of the preceding narrative the

name strikes one as surprising and seems to have crept into the text at a later period in Iceland, when some claimed that Karlsefne had even discovered Vinland (*Landnáma* 3, 10). This is a complete change of front, since two years before this they were all agreed that Straumfjord was not in Vinland. With the experiences that they had in Straumfjord they could hardly have left with the conviction that they had found Leif's Vinland.

The following summer Karlsefne and Snorre returned to Iceland and told of their voyage and the strange adventures which they had met. This became the nucleus of the Karlsefne saga and was gradually accepted and recognized in Iceland as the Vinland saga. Whether this was in accord with the Vinland saga current in Greenland no one cared to examine. Leif lived in far away Greenland and had little chance to circulate his version in Iceland. Now the same thing happened here that has often happened on Polar expeditions and on voyages of discovery. They could not agree to divide the honors and there began a strife which has lasted down to our day. In how far Karlsefne himself is guilty of misrepresenting the facts and how much we are to attribute to his ambitious family, is not easy to determine. Under the circumstances the saga could hardly fail to develop in favor of the two most powerful families in Iceland. At any rate they made claims which Leif's friends in Greenland could not concede. From the saga as well as from other bits of information it appears that they sought to suppress Leif's and Thorvald's exploits and in that way to deprive them of their share in the discoveries in the new world. They tried to spread the report that Leif was only an accidental discoverer and had been driven to the coast in a storm and after a brief stay in Vinland had reached Greenland; but that Karlsefne with three ships and a large company had explored the country for three years and had made attempts to settle there. They made Leif play nearly the role that Bjarne has in the *Flateyrbok*. Thorvald and Freydis they took along on Karlsefne's expedition and assigned them third rate roles. Thorstein Eiriksson, who had conducted an unsuccessful expedition and who did not stand in the way of their ambitions, they left unmolested. In thinly veiled language they attacked even Eirik the Red, who had helped them in many

ways and had shown them great hospitality in Greenland. To show their ingratitude for his hospitality they related that, when Christmas drew near, food became so scarce at Brattalid that Eirik did not know which way to turn to provide enough to prepare for the holidays, and he felt alarmed lest the visitors should say that they had never seen a worse Christmas than the one Eirik the Red had given them in Greenland. In this pinch the wealthy Karlsefne opened his rich stores and told him to take freely and make ready for Christmas. Then matters changed and Eirik prepared a Christmas banquet the like of which they had not seen in Greenland. About Leif in the Hebrides they told a story which is probably false and certainly uncalled for in a Vinland saga. From this and more in the same vein we see that Karlsefne's friends did not go out of their way to protect and shield the honor or the claim which Eirik the Red and his children had in the discovery of America.

When Karlsefne and Snorre returned to Iceland the report spread rapidly that they had been in Vinland. Although they had entertained doubts about this on the voyage, it was more than human to resist the glory thus thrust upon them on their return to Iceland. That they had been in the New World, no one could question; whether the land that Karlsefne and his men had explored was the Vinland that Leif had found few were interested in deciding. Even if a few people in Iceland were correctly informed in this matter, they could hardly hold their own against the powerful influence of Karlsefne and Snorre Gode.

The earliest account of Leif's visit with King Olaf Trygvason and his return to Greenland is found in *Kristni saga* from about 1120. Since Torkel Gellisson and Thuride Spaka, Snorre's daughter, are the sources from which Are Frode drew, it is likely that he gathered his information before 1100. The text of the *Kristni saga* is brief and direct: þat sumar for Olafr Konungr or landi suðr til Vendlands. þá sendi hann ok Leif Eiríksson til Grænlands at boða tru. þá fann Leifr Vinland hit goða. Hann fann ok menn á skipflaki i hafi. þvi var hann kallaðr Leifr hin heppni. That summer sailed King Olaf away from the country south to Vendland. Then he sent also Leif Eiriksson to Green-

land to order the faith. Thereupon found Leif Vinland the Good. He found also men on a wreck in the sea. On this account he was called Leif the Lucky.

If we translate þa with *thereupon, later*, we have here the same account as in the Flateyrbok.

Leif's three achievements were, that he introduced Christianity in Greenland, found Vinland and rescued the shipwrecked men on the ocean. The question to settle is, whether he found Vinland on his return from Norway in the year 1000 or, as we read in the Flateyrbok, that Leif in the winter of 1001-02 bought Bjarne's ship and in the following summer found Helluland, Markland and Vinland on a separate voyage after the introduction of Christianity in Greenland. If we here translate þá with *then, at that time, on that voyage*, we reject the account in the Flateyrbok, that Leif in the winter of 1001-02 bought Bjarne's ship and in the following summer found Helluland, Markland and Vinland. If we accept that þá here means *thereupon, later*, we have in the Kristni saga the notable achievements of Leif mentioned in historical sequence, first that he introduced Christianity in Greenland, then that he found Vinland and thereupon rescued the shipwrecked. Like *da* in Norwegian and *then* in English, þá in Old Norse is frequently used in both ways. My opinion is that Are Frode in this place used þá in the sense *thereupon*, and that later, when friends in Iceland desired to transfer to Karlsefne all possible honor in the discovery and to give the tradition a different turn, they shifted the meaning from *thereupon* to *then*. It is not uncommon, however, in the Icelandic sagas to give more than one version of the same event. Both accounts can not be true and remain side by side. This view reconciles both sagas and accounts for both Vinlands. If on the other hand we take þá to mean *at that time*, we reject the Flateyrbok and accept the Karlsefne saga as the only Vinland saga. We observe that in the oldest source Leif is called the Lucky, because he rescued the shipwrecked men.

Upwards of one hundred years after this we find about the year 1200 a similar account in Gunlaug Leifsson's Great Saga of Olaf Trygvason, chapter 231: For Leifr þat

sumar til Grænlands; hann tok í hafi skipshöfn þeirra manna, er þá voru ufærir ok lágu á skipsflaki albrotnu, ok í þeirri somu ferð fann hann Vinland hit góða ok kom at áliðnu því sumri til Grænlands, ok fór til vistar heim í Brattahlíð til Eiríks föður síns. Kolluðu menn hann síðan Leif hinn heppna. Sailed Leif that summer to Greenland; in the sea he found a ship's crew of men who were helpless and lay on a broken wreck, and on the same voyage he found Vinland the Good and came at the end of the summer to Greenland and went home to Brattalid to stay with his father Eirik. People called him afterwards Leif the Lucky.

When we start with *Kristni saga*, we see how the same account grows in course of time. Here Gunlaug takes pains to make þá mean *then, at that time*, by inserting *on that voyage, at the end of the summer*.

From about 1237 we have the same account by Snorre Sturlason in the saga of Olaf Trygvason. En þetta sumar, er Gizur fór til Íslands sendi Olafr Konungr Leif til Grænlands at bóða þar Kristni; fór hann þat sumar til Grænlands; hann fann í hafi menn á skipsflaki, ok hjalpði þeim; þá fann hann ok Vinland hit góða, ok kom of haustit til Grænlands; hann hafði þannig prest ok aðra kennimenn, ok fór til vistar í Brattahlíð til Eiríks föður síns; menn kolluðu hann síðan Leif hinn heppna; en Eiríkr, faðir hans, sagði svá, at þat var samskulda, er Leifr hafði borgit skipshöfn manna í hafi, ok þat er hann hafði flutt skæmanninn til Grænlands, þat var prestrinn.

But the summer that Gizur went to Iceland, King Olaf sent Leif to Greenland to order the Christian faith there; he went that summer to Greenland; at sea he found men on a wreck and helped them; then found he also Vinland the Good and came in the fall to Greenland; he took with him thither a priest and other teachers and went to Brattalid to his father, Eirik, for the winter; people called him after that Leif the Lucky; but his father Eirik said that the one was an offset against the other, that he had rescued the ship's crew at sea and that he had brought the impostor to Greenland, meaning the priest.

The form and the wording in both these accounts are so like that in the *Kristni saga*, that we do not hesitate to say that both Gunlaug and Snorre made use of the *Kristni*

saga and paraphrased its contents. Like Gunlaug, Snorre understood þá to mean *at that time* by adding *in the fall*. From the fact that we find nothing new in this account, we conclude that in the 13th century they had no other source for this event than Are Frode, as we have him today. Gunlaug Leifsson and Snorre Sturlason seem to be mistaken in saying that Leif rescued the shipwrecked crew before he found Vinland. Kristni saga, Karlsefne saga AM. 544 and 557, Flateyrbok and AM. 192 place the rescuing of the crew after the finding of Vinland.

The last account of Leif's return to Greenland is found in Karlsefne's saga from 1305-34: Lætr Leifr i haf ok er lengi uti, ok hitti á lönd þau, er hann vissi áðr enga ván til. Varu þar hveitiakrar sjálfsánir, ok vinviðr vaxinn. Þar varu þau tre er mósurr heita, ok höfðu þeir af þessu øllu nokkur merki, sum tre svá mikil at i hus voru lögð.

Leifr fann menn á skipsflaki ok flutti heim með ser. Syndi hann i því hina mestu stormensku ok drengskap, sem mörðu øðru, er hann kom kristni á landit, ok var jafnan síðan kallaðr Leifr hinn heppni. Leifr tok land i Eiriks-firði, ok fór heim síðan i Brattahlíð; toku þar allir menn vel við honum.

Hann boðaði brátt kristni um landit ok almenniliga tru, ok syndi mönnum orðsending Olafs konungs Trygvasonar, ok sagði hversu mörög ágæti ok mikil dyrð fylgði þessum síð. Eiríkr tok því máli seint at láta síð sinn, en Þjóðhildr gekk skjott undir, ok let gera kirkju eigi alnær husum. Var þat hus kallat Þjóðhildar-kirkja; hafði hon þar fram bænir sínar ok þeir menn, sem við Kristni toku, enn þeir vátu margir. Þjóðhildr vildi ekki halda samfarar við Eirík, síðan er hon tok tru, enn honum var þat mjök imoti skapi.

Leif put to sea and was long out and came upon lands of which he had no knowledge before. There were self-sown wheat fields and there grew vinvið. There were the trees which are called mosur and of all they took samples; some trees were so large that they were laid in houses.

Leif found men upon a wrecked ship and took them home with him. He showed in this as well as in other things, when he introduced Christianity into the land, the greatest magnanimity and ability, and he was always after

that called Leif the Lucky. Leif landed in Eiriksfiord and went home to Brattalid—all received him well.

Forthwith he ordered them to accept Christianity and the Catholic faith and showed to the people the order of King Olaf Trygvason and told them how much honor and glory accompanied this faith. Eirik was slow to give up his belief; but Thjodhild yielded quickly and had a church built a short distance from the houses. That house was called Thjodhild church; there she and those who had received the faith offered up their prayers. Thjodhild refused to live with Eirik after she had accepted the faith; but that displeased him much.

Again we have Leif's achievements arranged in the Icelandic order and amplified and embellished according to the style of the period. At first sight the author seems to know more about these occurrences than former saga-tellers; but it is only apparently so. He enlarges upon the discovery of Vinland by telling of the good things there, self-sown wheat fields, *vinvid* and *mosur* trees, but when we read of Karlsefne's discovery, we find the very same words about self-sown wheat and *vinvid*, and in the Flateyarbok we read that Karlsefne found *mosur* in Vinland. To make the two places agree and to make it appear probable that Karlsefne's Hop was Leif's Vinland the author pieced together this passage from known sources.

In relating that Leif rescued the shipwrecked crew, the author makes a comparison between the saving of these men and the introduction of Christianity. From this passage it is not clear why Leif was called the Lucky.

The passage about the introduction of Christianity the author swells by remarks that are either self-evident or denied in other places.

From what we have stated above we have every reason to believe that the account that Leif found Vinland on his return from Norway is more recent than the account given in the Flateyarbok. Both accounts can not be equally reliable and accepted at the same time. It is plain that the tradition in Iceland would in course of time undergo some change. That this change took a turn in favor of Karlsefne is not surprising.



## CONCLUSION

**S**UMMING up the entire question I shall take the occasion to call attention to some general thoughts which have not found a place elsewhere. From the waters where the Norsemen were wont to sail there were three routes to the American Continent, which the sagas have treated in their own way. Ships might drift in from the open sea, as Bjarne and Leif are said to have done when they sailed to Greenland. That a ship might thus be driven out of its course and come to land on the other side of the ocean, is not astonishing and has no doubt happened both before and since. The remarkable thing is, that they found their bearing and were able to steer to Greenland and take advantage of their situation. The well known tales about Are Marsson, Björn Asbrandsson and Gunleiv Gunlaugsson suggest that adventures of this nature actually occurred in those times.

They might sail across the sea from Greenland to Labrador, as Leif and Thorvald are said to have done in the *Flateyrbok*. Being mentioned outside of the Vinland sagas it must have been a well known route. Traditions among the Eskimos and ruins on the Labrador coast point in the same direction.

It was possible to sail from the West Bygd over to the coast of Baffin Land and thence south to Labrador, as the *Karlsefne* saga carefully describes. That the old Greenlanders knew the coast of Baffin Land is likely. That some of the numerous ships that went north to fish along the coast of Greenland should have been driven across Davis Strait is very probable and attested in the sagas and in the Icelandic geographies.

Following the Labrador coast south they came to the

Strait of Belle Isle. There the route divides; one goes south and another southwest. One could follow the Labrador coast to Anticosti and Gaspé and then follow the south bank of the St. Lawrence river to rich and beautiful tracts. From Gaspé and New Brunswick they cruised eastward past Prince Edward Island and followed the west coast of Newfoundland to the Strait of Belle Isle, as Thorvald did.

From the Strait they could follow the east coast of Newfoundland to Cape Race or the west coast to Cape Ray.

From this summary of the routes we see the real relations between the two sagas. The *Karlsefne* saga contains one of these voyages and follows one of these routes and does not exclude the others. Leif's accidental voyage to Vinland becomes superfluous. It was only after they had separated the *Karlsefne* saga from the others and torn it loose from its connections, that they found it necessary to introduce the story of Leif's accidental discovery of Vinland as an introduction and back-ground to *Karlsefne's* voyage.

Writers are not agreed as to the names of the two sagas. Both have been called the saga of Eirik the Red, probably because they both contain the episode of the discovery of Greenland by Eirik the Red. That the account in the *Flateyrbok* is not the saga of Eirik the Red, is apparant from the fact that this very saga refers to the saga of Eirik for a fuller account of the difference between Eirik and Thorgest. That the *Karlsefne* saga can not be the lost Eirik's saga either, is evident from the fact that in this place it is substantially the same as the *Flateyrbok* and that both here copy the *Landnáma*. Its contents furthermore show that it is a *Karlsefne* saga and not an Eirik's saga.

The account in the *Flateyrbok* is called the *Grænlen-dinga þattr*, or the account of the Greenlanders. The name shows that it was the version of the Vinland voyages current in Greenland. In this way the Greenlanders related the voyages of their ancestors to Vinland. It is reasonable to suppose that they used a version that did not exclude the story of their own exploits. That the Greenlanders, as we are told in the *Karlsefne* saga, had almost no share in the Vinland voyages is not credible and is in fact rejected

by all. Even Nansen, who discards both sagas, maintains that the Greenlanders in all probability discovered America.

When Arne Magnusson acquired the oldest codex of the Karlsefne saga, he wrote on the title page: *Her hefr upp sögu þeirra þorfinns Karlsefnis ok Snorra þorbrandssonar*. Here begins the saga of Thorfin Karlsefne and Snorre Thorbrandsson. Whether the name had faded and he wrote it over again or he obtained it from some other source, is not known. The name corresponds to the contents and it seems useless to attempt to prove that this is an Eirik's saga rauda, as Vigfusson and Storm have tried to do. People in Iceland made too little ado about Leif and Thorvald and concerned themselves too much about Karlsefne.

When we reconcile the warring factions and accept the account of the Greenlanders for Bjarne, Leif and Thorvald and that of the Icelanders for Karlsefne, we deal fairly and do substantial justice to both and obtain a result that satisfies all reasonable demands.

Originally Karlsefne's saga began with Karlsefne. The genealogical record at the end was added little by little. The chapter on the discovery of Greenland may well have found a place in both sagas. The accounts of Queen Aud, Thorbjörn Vivilsson and the witch Thorbjörg have no organic connection with this saga.

The Vinland sagas are not biographical like those of Egil Skallagrímsson or the Eyrbyggja saga, that relate the entire life of the hero. On the other hand they consist of a series of short stories or episodes, each of which deals with one voyage, all loosely joined to each other by their common interest in the new discoveries on the east coast of America. They mention in the first place the family and rank of the discoverer, give thereupon a detailed account of the voyage itself and finally sum up in a few words their return home, if they did not perish in the undertaking. The Flateyrbok relates the adventures of Bjarne, Leif, Thorvald, Thorstein and Karlsefne and of Freydis, Helge and Finboge. The Karlsefne saga relates only the voyage of Karlsefne.

Thus the Vinland sagas are incidents in the lives of these men and in so far resemble family sagas (*Aettesagaer*) of the kind of Rafnkel Fróisgode's saga. The interest centers

in this chapter of their lives, which the saga takes up, but the character and contents vary.

Though the core of the family saga is historical and rests on a solid basis, there is much fiction both in details and in motive. The saga-maker has introduced freely what he thought suited the time that he depicted. In the manner of the saga it goes into details with the minuteness of an eyewitness and cites the words of the speakers with the accuracy of a stenographer. Enchanted weapons and animals play a great role. In short, the family saga receives a rather free treatment.

In the Vinland sagas on the other hand all is real and historical in accordance with the views of the period. To be sure, the saga mentions a Uniped and a land of Unipeds; but it is in connection with Thorvald's second death and is all fictitious. Ghosts and spectres appear, but in Greenland and in connection with the pest that ravages the bygd in the winter. Such stories are common in the sagas and have dominated the popular imagination down to a recent period. On the expedition itself the saga-teller takes pains to observe accurately and to relate the events with great care. That all is not made clear comes from the fact that he does not possess a full and complete knowledge of the country and its conditions. It is no easy matter for the first time to locate a country and to describe places where definite starting points are lacking. They were not in the habit of preparing accurate scientific treatises. Their purpose was to give a true and accurate account. The saga gives directions and distances besides a brief description of each land at which they touched. Unfortunately they lacked instruments and reliable methods. Under difficult circumstances they made use of all the means at their command.

When the sagas describe the sailings and the routes, the narrative runs so smoothly that we almost forget how real they are. The form is so elevated above the commonplace that it reads like a romance. As the story passed from mouth to mouth for long ages, it assumed a smooth and finished form and was finally recorded by men who knew how to value and select what was most important. In the long development that the stories underwent before they

were written down they partly lost and partly won. They lost no doubt many details, which the memory was unable to hold, but they have enlarged upon and emphasized important points and sought to preserve broad traits. In course of time these sagas have become idealized and somewhat elevated in thought and language. As these seafaring men make ready and go from land to land along the coast, they often make use of almost regular expressions, which correspond somehow to the stereotyped lines that recur in the Homeric poems. In the long winter evenings in Iceland they repeated these tales so often that the leading characters become greater and mightier than the rest and appear to be heroes.

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## NOTES

1. Thormod Thorfason, *Historia Vinlandiæ Antiquæ*. Copenhagen, 1705.
2. Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, Vol. I, p. 347.
3. C. C. Rafn, *Antiquitates Americane*, p. 135.
4. Rafn, *Antiquitates Americane*, Cop. 1837.
5. Gustav Storm, *Studier over Vinlandsreiseerne*, Cop. 1887.
6. Gustav Storm, *Studies on the Vinland Voyages*, Extract of *Memoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord*, Cop. 1888.
7. Fridtjof Nansen, *In Northern Mists*, New York, 1911.
8. Fridtjof Nansen, *Nord i Taakeheimen*, Kristiania, 1911.
9. William Hovgaard, *The Voyages of the Norsemen to America*, New York, 1914.
10. W. Bell Dawson, *Currents in the Strait of Belle Isle*, Ottawa, Canada.
11. W. T. Grenfell, *Labrador*, p. 55.
12. A. S. Packard, *The Labrador Coast*, p. 107.
13. G. F. Wright, *Greenland's Icefields*, pp. 24, 29-31.
14. Nicholas Senn, *In the Heart of the Arctic*, pp. 43-50.
15. Grenfell's *Labrador*, p. 111.
16. Grenfell's *Labrador*, p. 102.
17. Report of the Brown-Harvard Expedition to Nachvak.
18. It is worth while to examine the illustrations in Grenfell's *Labrador* and in the Report of the Brown-Harvard Expedition to Nachvak in 1930.
19. Grenfell *Labrador*, p. 102.
20. A. P. Low, *Annual Report, Geological Survey of Canada, 1896, Part L, Vol. III.*, pp. 30 ff.
21. W. G. Gosling, *Labrador*, p. 11 and ff.
22. Daniel Bruun, *Det Høje Nord*, Cop., 1902.
23. Daniel Bruun, *Det Høje Nord*, pp. 198-221.
24. Rafn, *Antiquitates Amer.*, p. 271.
25. Rafn, *Ant. Amer.*, p. 271.
26. Nansen, *In Northern Mists*, Vol. II, p. 2, and Hovgaard, *Voyages of the Norsemen*, p. 118.
27. Finnur Jonsson, *Grønlands Topografi efter Kilderne. Meddelelser om Grønland*, 20. hefte, pp. 319-20.
28. Daniel Bruun, *Det Høje Nord*, pp. 1-152.
29. Eyrbyggja saga, c. 24.
30. For chronology cf. Finnur Jonsson, *Meddelelser om Grønland*, 20. hefte, p. 268.
31. Knut Gjerset, *History of the Norwegian People*, Vol. I, pp. 197-223.
32. Eyrbyggja saga, c. 54.
33. M. L. Fernald, *Notes on the plants of Wineland the Good*, Rhodora, Boston, 1910.
34. These I take to be Eskimos. There is nothing in the description militating against that view, and the proximity to Labrador makes it more likely.
35. A good resumé of the different views will be found in the appendix to Hovgaard's book.
36. Hovgaard, *Voyages of the Norsemen*, p. 238 ff.
37. The boats of the Eskimos are mentioned on four occasions in the Vinland sagas, two in each saga, and every time they are called skin-boats. Are Frode says that the first settlers in Greenland found among other things remnants of boats showing that the same kind of people had formerly dwelt there as they later found in Vinland. The boats of the early Eskimos in Greenland were no doubt skin-boats such as Thorvald and Karlsefne saw in Vinland. The Vinland sagas and the *Islendingabók* are then in accord. According to my

views Hop was in Newfoundland. Did the Eskimos live in Newfoundland about the year 1000? The habitat of the Eskimo is the same as that of the seal and the walrus on which he mainly subsists. Less than 200 years ago both these animals abounded in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The conclusion would be that the Eskimos could at that time have lived in Newfoundland. In historical times the Eskimos have been found only in small numbers south of Labrador. But that may have been for other reasons. Being in control of the Labrador coast, they could hardly fail to cross the narrow strait on the ice or in boats. If the Red Indians had not occupied Newfoundland by the year 1000, I see no reason why the Eskimos could not have had their southern outposts in the island. The sagas point to the Eskimos. It is a dilemma. If they were Eskimos in skin-boats, they were then located farther south than they are known to have lived in historical times. If they were Indians in bark canoes, the Norsemen did not observe the difference between skin-boats and bark canoes. That the Norsemen met Indian tribes in the St. Lawrence valley is another question not mentioned in the Vinland sagas. Cf. W. G. Gosling, *Labrador*, pp. 17-18 and Grenfell, *Labrador*, p. 362.

Many writers have found Indian traits in the Skraelings in Hop and Vinland. It is likely that the Greenlanders met Indian tribes in the St. Lawrence valley and that this knowledge of them has colored the description. The hell hurled by the Skraelings is supposed to have been the demon's head or the ballista, as Schooten calls it, of the Algonquin Indians in the St. Lawrence valley.

36. A passage in the *Eyrbyggja* saga, c. 43, is supposed to be important in determining the date of the expedition of Karlsetne and Snorre. It states that after peace had been made between the men of Eyre and Aptfjof in 993 Thorbrand's sons, Thorleif Kinnbe and Snorre, went to Greenland. Thorleif lived in Greenland till old age, and Kimbevag is named after him; but Snorre went with Karlsetne to Vinland the Good, and when they fought with the Skraelings Snorre's son Thorbrand fell. The best text places c. 43 after c. 55 and advances the event by about four years; but it is not decisive. I take this to be a somewhat general statement and to mean that Thorleif went to Greenland shortly after the peace and stayed there, but that Snorre went with Karlsetne at the time when he made his well-known expedition to Vinland. Regarding Karlsetne little is known beyond what we have in the Vinland Sagas. Snorre Gode, however, was one of the most remarkable men in Iceland and appears in several sagas. As Karlsetne and Snorre sailed in the same ship to Vinland we can control the movements of the one by those of the other. It is not possible to place this expedition before 1000, as Snorre according to the *Eyrbyggja* and *Foksfloa* sagas was busy in Iceland every year till 1003 and in 1007 and '08 and as the saga states explicitly that Snorre lived at Helgafell eight years after Christianity was adopted by law in Iceland. Storm places the expedition in 1002-06 and is in conflict with the sagas in several places. The expedition of Karlsetne and Snorre required five winters and parts of six summers which Storm has also ignored. As they were away from Ice only four full summers it appears that they counted their absence only four years. In 1008 Snorre exchanged estates with Gudmund and moved to Tunge in Söðnesl. where after twenty-four years Snorre died in 1031. The saga is aware of the expedition of Snorre and makes provision for it after he left Helgafell. It states that he lived twenty years at Tunge allowing four years for his absence in Greenland and Vinland. I accept the following chronology.

- Blarne's voyage to Greenland 985.
- Blarne visits Earl Erik 1000-01.
- Erik visits Blarne 1001-02.
- Erik's expedition to Vinland 1002-03.
- Thorvald's expedition to Vinland 1003-06.
- Thorsen's expedition 1007.
- Karlsetne leaves Iceland 1008.
- Karlsetne's expedition to Vinland 1009-12.
- Karlsetne returns to Iceland 1013.

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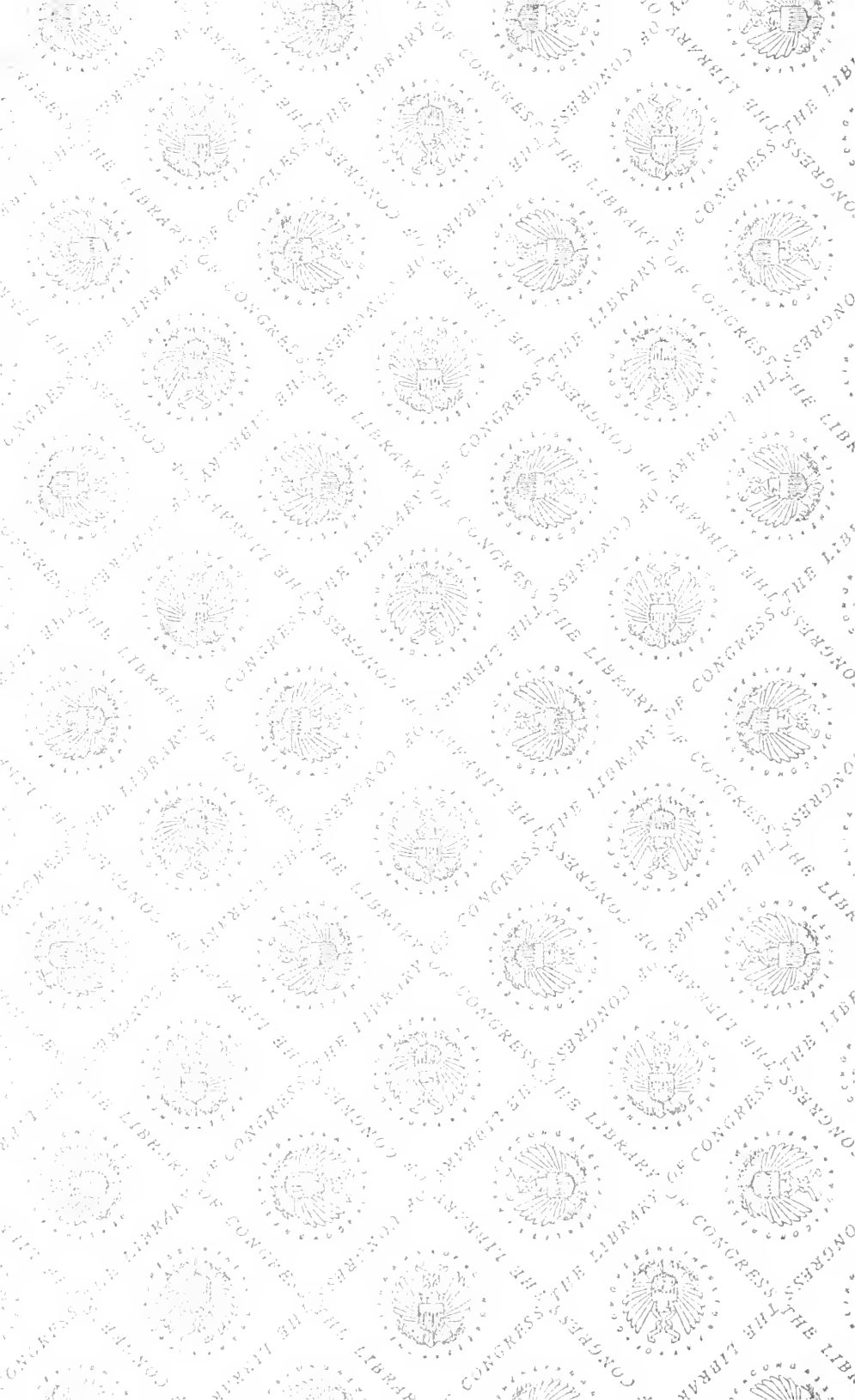
# INDEX

- Abbott Nicholas of Thingcvi. 55.  
Adam of Bremen. 11, 125, 126.  
Algonquins. 99.  
Alptafjord. 60, 69, 73, 159.  
Anticosti. 90, 91, 98, 135, 140, 145, 151.  
Are Frode. 129, 148, 149, 151.  
Are Marsson. 53, 128, 129, 130, 153.  
Astronomical observations. 13, 15, 17, 18, 49, 22, 141.  
Baffin Land. 16, 26, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64, 71, 102, 103, 104, 132, 133, 135, 153.  
Bardar saga Snæfellsass. 62.  
Bishops Harbor. 31, 34, 89, 107.  
Bishops Mitre. 38, 82, 83.  
Bjarmaland. 51, 54, 57.  
Bjarne Grimolfsson. 101, 102, 115, 119.  
Bjarne Herjolfsson. 11, 12, 20, 26, 38, 74, 76, 78-84, 85, 87, 90, 95, 96, 102, 128, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 142, 144, 149, 153.  
Bjarmey. 21, 26, 41, 49, 60, 61, 102, 103, 105, 135.  
Björn Asbrandsson. 129, 130, 153.  
Björnbo. A. A., 21, 55, 56, 64.  
Björn Jonsson. 12, 12, 16, 52, 53, 58, 59, 62, 71, 78, 88.  
Blanc Sablon. 31, 89, 90.  
Blaserk. 46, 70, 143.  
Borgarfjord. 72, 129.  
Brattalid. 73, 76, 81, 94, 101, 119, 148, 150, 151, 152.  
Breidifjord. 67, 72, 129.  
Brown-Harvard Expedition. 38, 39.  
Bugge, Thomas. 15.  
Cape Bauld. 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 89, 90, 97, 107, 108.  
Cape Breton Island. 20, 29, 110, 111.  
Cape Chidley. 34, 38, 105.  
Cape Cod. 17.  
Cape Cove. 97.  
Cape Farewell. 54, 62.  
Cape Gaspe. 145.  
Cape Mugford. 37, 38, 39, 40, 81, 82, 84, 85.  
Cape Norman. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 89, 90, 96, 97, 107, 109, 111, 115, 135, 139.  
Cape Porcupine. 89.  
Cape Race. 78, 110, 111, 151.  
Cape Ray. 111, 151.  
Cartier, Jacques. 42.  
Chateau Bay. 28.  
Christianity. 57, 74, 76, 98, 102, 111, 126, 130, 119, 150, 152, 159.  
Cooks Harbor. 30, 32.  
Dagmalastad. 13, 15, 92.  
Davis Bay. 48, 50, 52.  
Davis Inlet. 26, 40, 89, 105.  
Davis Strait. 50, 52, 58, 59, 102, 153.  
Dighton Writing Rock. 17, 18.  
Disco Island. 26, 27, 61, 103.  
Drangar. 67, 68, 69.  
Dublin. 119, 129, 130.  
Doegr. 16, 17, 49, 50, 80, 81, 83, 90, 91, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 110, 129, 133, 135, 145.  
Earl Eirik. 84, 128.  
East Bygd. 46, 47, 49, 54, 58, 70, 71, 131, 143.  
Eiriksfiord. 26, 49, 71, 72, 98, 102, 121, 124, 131, 145, 152.  
Eiriks saga Rauda. 69, 151, 155.  
Eirik the Red. 17, 46, 48, 49, 66-77, 101, 102, 111, 119, 122, 128, 135, 137, 139, 142, 148, 151, 151.  
Eirik Uppsi. bishop of Greenland. 126.  
Eyktarstad. 13, 15, 19, 92.  
Eyrar. 16, 78.  
Eyrbyggja saga. 68, 129, 142, 155, 159.  
Eskimos. 38, 42, 43, 44, 50, 55, 118, 153.  
Eystri Bygd. 48, 52, 53, 55.  
Faroe Islands. 63, 66.  
Finboge. 12, 122-127.  
Flateyrbok. 11, 42, 44, 17, 20, 67, 75, 78, 99, 104, 106, 111, 119-121, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 151, 152, 154, 155.  
Floamanna saga. 46.  
Forests. 37, 39, 40, 12, 14, 89, 95, 106, 117.  
Four Peaks. 26, 27, 39.  
Freydis. 12, 102, 106, 116, 117, 122-127, 142, 147.  
Furdustrandir. 26, 27, 32, 54, 58, 107, 108, 112, 113, 145.  
Gardar. 48, 50, 54, 73, 75, 122, 124.  
Gaspé. 90, 91, 96, 98, 135, 139, 140, 141, 151.  
Glaciers. 38, 46, 50, 51, 52, 53, 80, 88, 105.  
Gragas. 13, 19.  
Grapes. 18, 20, 22, 91, 92, 93, 94, 98, 109, 110, 120, 121, 126, 136, 141, 146.  
Greipar. 47, 48, 51.  
Greenland. 16, 21, 24, 42, 44, 46-62, 70-73, 83, 85, 94, 101-102, 119, 122, 144, 148-152.  
Grenfell, Wilfred T., 29, 34, 41.  
Grettir's saga. 142.  
Grinnell Glacier. 25, 26, 27.  
Gripla. 46, 53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 62, 107.  
Grœnlendinga pattr. 138, 154.  
Grœnlands Historiske Mindesmærker. 49.  
Gudleif Gudlaugsson. 129, 130, 139, 153.  
Gudrid. 20, 73, 94, 101, 119, 120, 136.  
Gulf of St. Lawrence. 27, 90, 107, 125, 135, 136, 145.  
Gunlaug Leifsson. 150, 151.  
Halogaland. 52, 57, 74.  
Halls Bay. 114.  
Hamilton Inlet. 40, 41, 89, 105, 106, 107, 115, 135.  
Hankadal. 67, 68.  
Hauksbok. 12, 70, 108, 111, 112, 138, 143.  
Hebrides. 148.  
Helge and Finboge. 12, 122-127.  
Helluland. 12, 15, 21, 23, 40, 41, 42, 49, 51, 56, 61, 62, 86, 97, 102, 103, 106, 135, 146.  
Hellur. 101, 105, 106, 113.  
Herjolfsson. 9, 26, 49, 73, 78, 81, 128.  
Historia Norvegiæ. 50, 51, 126.  
Hop. 17, 20, 25, 26, 61, 110, 111, 114, 115, 148, 149, 133, 136, 141.  
Hovgaard, William. 25-27, 134.

- Hafn, the Limerick sailor, 129.  
Hudson's Bay Co., 39, 40.  
Hvard, 47, 50, 88.  
Hvitramannaland, 53, 119, 129, 130, 139, 143.  
Hvitserk, 46, 47, 52, 53, 54, 64, 70, 88.  
Iceland, 9, 48, 51, 67, 69, 92, 94, 102, 124, 126, 127, 128, 142, 145, 147, 148.  
Icelandic Annals, 106, 126, 141.  
Icelandic geographies, 21, 33, 41, 52, 63, 95, 107, 110, 126, 132, 141, 146, 153.  
Indians, 125.  
Ireland, 27, 53, 102, 110, 113, 114, 119, 136, 139.  
Ivar Baardsson, 46, 88.  
Jokul, 38, 46, 51, 52, 53, 54, 89, 85, 86, 88, 94, 143.  
Karlanda, 59, 64.  
Karlsfene saga, 12, 19, 20, 59, 64, 67, 97, 142, 143, 145, 149, 151, 153.  
Kaunajet, 37.  
Kigljott, 37.  
King's Mirror, 63.  
Kjalnes, 9, 17, 20, 26, 27, 32, 33, 41, 96, 97, 102, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 135, 136, 139, 140, 145, 146.  
Knattleikr, 99, 158.  
Kristni saga, 71, 75, 118, 119, 150, 151.  
Kroka-Ref's saga, 52.  
Kroksfjardarheide, 47, 48, 50, 51, 71, 141.  
Krossanes, 9, 18, 97, 135.  
Labrador, 16, 26, 28, 31, 34-45, 50, 53, 81, 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 98, 102, 104-107, 127, 131, 153.  
Lacrosse, 99.  
Lundnam, 70, 71, 103, 141, 143, 147, 154.  
Leif Eiriksson, 12, 19, 67, 73, 75, 76, 81-91, 105, 106, 113, 120, 121, 124, 128, 131, 135, 137, 138, 141, 142, 144, 148, 149, 150, 151, 153, 155.  
Little Bay Island, 111.  
Lysefjord, 21, 22, 59, 64.  
Markland, 12, 15, 21, 23, 24, 26, 40, 41, 42, 47, 52, 56, 62, 90, 97, 102, 105, 106, 118, 126, 135, 142, 146.  
Martha's Vineyard, 47.  
Meljokul, 70, 143.  
Moravian Mission, 39, 42.  
Mugford Tickle, 38, 82, 83, 86.  
Mythological sagas, 21, 51, 62.  
More, 46.  
Norway, 9, 16, 51, 52, 53, 57, 73, 74, 75, 84, 94, 129.  
Nova Scotia, 15, 20, 21, 22, 26, 78, 93, 111.  
Notre Dame Bay, 441.  
Norse Legends, 128-139.  
Nordseta, 47.  
Newfoundland, 27, 41, 50, 52, 89, 93, 107, 141, 143, 139, 146, 151.  
Nansen, Fridtjof, 23-24, 46, 74.  
Nau, 37, 40, 41, 105, 135.  
Nahvak Bay, 38, 45, 87.  
Olygdur, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 62, 71.  
Odd Johnsson, 49, 103.  
Olaf Trygvason, 71, 118, 150, 151.  
Phytan, Capt. R. L., 49.  
Point Amour, 28, 109.  
Porcupine Strand, 89.  
Port Manners, 37, 40, 81.  
Rafn, Carl Christian, 10, 14-18, 19, 21, 40, 62, 141.  
Reykhol, 15.  
Rhode Island, 16, 25, 42.  
Rhode Island Historical Society, 40, 47.  
Rimonski, 92, 95.  
Rundegla, 80, 94.  
Sailing directions, 17-18, 22, 23, 25-27, 33, 41, 49, 59, 69-72, 78-81, 90-91, 95-96, 102, 103, 104, 105-108, 110, 111, 115, 117-118, 129, 132, 133, 135-136.  
St. Anthony, 29, 79.  
St. Brandon, 23, 24.  
St. John's, 28, 31.  
St. Lawrence River, 92, 95, 98, 125, 135, 154.  
Sandy Cove, 109.  
Sandwich Bay, 27, 89.  
Sigurd Stephansson, 41, 55, 58.  
Skin-boats, 97, 115, 116, note 35.  
Skralings, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 97, 115-117, 118, 120, 135, 142.  
Snæfelli, 50, 71.  
Snæfellsnes, 113.  
Snorre Sturlason, 150, 151.  
Snorre Thorbrandsson, Gode, 69, 73, 75, 76, 101, 102, 112, 115, 116, 118, 148, 155.  
Snow, 17, 27, 29, 37, 38, 40, 41, 48, 82, 83, 86, 87, 88, 115, 135, 141.  
Storm, Gustav, 19-22, 23, 49, 63, 111, 132, 141.  
Straight Shore, 30, 32, 109.  
Strait of Belle Isle, 28-33, 36, 41, 63, 89, 107, 108, 109, 135, 136, 139, 140, 145, 154.  
Straumfjord, 17, 20, 27, 64, 107, 110, 115, 118, 119, 127, 136, 141, 142, 146, 147.  
Straumsey, 17, 110.  
Svalbard, 46.  
The Northern Geography, 46-65.  
Thor, 112.  
Thorarin Nefjolfsson, 46.  
Thorbjorg, Lilil-Velva, 12, 144, 155.  
Thorbiorn Vivilsson, 69, 73, 74, 155.  
Thore, the Norwegian, 20, 94.  
Thorin Karlsfene, 41, 32, 49, 75, 76, 104-121, 122, 124, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 149, 152, 154, 155.  
Thorgils Orrheimsfostre, 17.  
Thorgest, 68, 69, 72, 151.  
Thorhal Gamla, Vendedingr, 101, 102, 142.  
Thorhal Veideman, 17, 27, 49, 50, 102, 104, 107, 110, 112-115, 117, 136, 140, 145.  
Thorhald (Thiodhild), 67, 76, 143, 151, 152.  
Thorstein Eiriksson, 12, 66, 71, 119, 142, 146.  
Thorvald Eiriksson, 12, 18, 49, 76, 91-97, 106, 109, 117, 128, 135, 139, 140, 141, 142, 147, 154, 156.  
Thorvard, 102, 122, 123.  
Thuride Spaka, 148.  
Timber, 31, 32, 40, 44, 47, 64, 92, 93, 94, 95, 98, 106, 120, 122, 125, 126, 141, 142.  
Torkelson, Thormod, 11-13, 44, 141.  
Torkel Gellison, 129, 148.  
Torgats, 38.  
Trees, 31, 39, 40, 41, 47, 107, 141, 152.  
Tunit, 42, 44.  
Farker, 85, 92, 93.  
Uniped, 117, 143, 156.  
Vestri Bygd, 21, 26, 48, 49, 53, 55, 60, 62.  
Vestri Olygdur, 48, 49, 50, 55, 57, 58, 64, 62, 64, 70, 71, 103, 135, 143.  
Vetus Chorographia Grœnlandiæ, 59-61, 62, 72, 103.  
Viddin Pall, 15.  
Vinland location of, 13, 15, 24, 26-27, 91-94, 115-117, 134.  
Vinlandia, 41, 134.  
Vinud, 93-94, 98, 115, 124, 141, 151, 152.  
West Bygd, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 62, 70, 71, 102, 103, 131, 143, 153.  
White Bay, 26.  
Wooded woods, 31, 33, 40, 41, 47, 80, 88, 89, 95, 97, 105, 107, 141.  
Orvar-Odd's saga, 61, 133.









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